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TAKE ONE

300 FLEE FAR-OUT FILM

(The Life & Times of Michael Snow)

A Letter from the Publisher

Our price is going up.

As of the next issue, the cover price of TAKE ONE will increase from 25c to 40c a copy, and subscription rates (as of the date of publication of this issue) are increasing to $4.50 for a 12-issue (two-year) subscription ($6.50 for 18 issues; $8.00 for 24 issues).

How come?

Usually, in letters like this, the publisher writes about how much production costs have increased since the *last* price hike, how *this* price hike is really insignificant compared to the cost of living, the gross national product, the war in Vietnam, etc. Well, a lot of that's true for us too, but there's more yet. Read on:

First of all, we've never, ever raised our price before. TAKEONE has always cost a quarter (which, you must admit, is plenty cheap) — ever since 1966. It's been one of those things you could count on, like . . . Well, like what? What *can* you count on these days? We don't count on anything, ourselves, and maybe that's the point: YOU CAN'T COUNT ON ANYTHING!

But, philosophy aside, the reasoning behind the price increase has to do with a complicated structure laughingly known as "distribution". As it stands now, it costs you 25c to buy a copy of TAKEONE from a dealer — of which he gets a dime, and we get something less than 15c (something less because we pay shipping, absorb losses when dealers rip us off, etc.). The 15c is OK — we wouldn't mind making more, of course, but a good part of our revenue comes from ads and government grants anyway. It's the dealer's dime that stands central to our problem.

You may have noticed that it's not easy to find TAKE ONE on the stands. We do our best to get copies to as many dealers as possible, but there are lots of dealers who don't want to be bothered with handling us, since all they stand to make is a lousy dime a copy. The way we figure it, if we can offer them 15c they might be more interested in us.

But that's only the beginning. In addition to bringing in a few extra cents for us (and our net revenue really only *does* increase by a few cents, for various complicated reasons), the hopefully-increased circulation will enable us to charge more for ads, print more copies (bringing the cost-per-copy down), run more pages per issue (hopefully, we won't have to publish any more 32-page issues, ever!), and pay writers a little more than our current, token fees. All this stuff is tangled together, but as far as we can make it out, going to 40c will be a terrific shot in the arm for us all around.

Finally, with most serious film magazines selling for a buck, we feel that at 40c, TAKE ONE is still the People's Film Magazine at People's Prices. We'll try to give you as much for your bread as we always have — and for that extra 15c we can give you a whole lot more.

(On the subscription side, we have been losing a slight amount of money on every subscriber for the last few years now, as printing, mailing and handling costs have all risen substantially in the six years that we have been publishing. Subscriptions presently on our books will not have their expiry dates changed. Any new orders postmarked after midnight of the date of publication of this issue will have to be paid for at the new prices in order to be accepted.)

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★

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FEEDBACK

TAKE ONE welcomes communications from its readers, but can rarely accommodate letters over 500 words in length. The editors assume that any letter received (unless otherwise stated) is free for publication.

Some pancakes reviewed

As a secluded scholar who likes to sleep in movie shows, I have seen many films (I am not young — age 69), and classify them in my own way. Thus:

Spectacles are a great bore (such as **Dr. Zhivago, The Alamo, Lawrence of Arabia, Scrooge**).

Films in which everyone knows it's a joke (**Bonnie and Clyde, Marriage of a Young Stockbroker**, all Otto Preminger films).

Films in which everyone tried hard anyway. (**The Last Run, Taking Off, Billy Jack**).

And the most overrated director of all is Ingmar Bergman and his shallow garbage.

I saw **Vanishing Point** twice (as we have lots of double features in Chicago, you have to see an oldie with a new one). Your reviewer (Vol. 3, No. 1) has requirements of movies that would knock out Shakespeare. Movies are turned out like pancakes at a busy restaurant.

Carl Peterson
Chicago 60637

Cinderella as propaganda

Just as I received your Women in Film issue (Vol. 3, No. 3), I had taken Emily, my four-year-old daughter, and her two friends Squeeky and Booby, to see **Cinderella**, which is a powerful film indeed. So powerful it made me — a woman who thinks she has freed herself from extreme notions of romantic love — it made me wonder if I shouldn't still be passively submitting to whatever misery, and dreaming of Prince Charming sweeping me off to married bliss or heavenly rapture.

Should I be taking the underlying themes of these fairy tales seriously? It's a joke — or so I tell myself until I realize that millions are still brought up on this archaic conditioning, and that even Emily — at four years old — has heard enough about falling in love and finding the Prince to reasonably expect, as most women do, that all they have to do is dream and look beautiful (like Cinderella) and the Right Man will come along and take them away. Sweet passive submission or acceptance of slavery seem to be the only condoned attitudes in this world, since the other alternatives of feminine expression are witch-monster (the step-mother) and jealous ugly brat (the two step-sisters).

So, what happens to Cinderella? In the movie, she gets her man. In real life, she often does not — but is so trained to submit and wait that, by the time it is clear that Prince Charming isn't going to show up, Cinderella can no longer get up off her knees.

Judy Steed
Toronto 179

NEWS

Since our last issue, two pioneers of the Canadian film industry have died:

Ernest Ouimet, aged 95, died in Montreal. In 1904, he founded the "Bioscope" which showed films every Sunday — the first cinema in Canada and, perhaps, in all of North America. In 1908, using Pathé equipment, Mr. Ouimet filmed scenes of Montreal life which he exhibited in his cinema. In 1915, he was named exclusive North American representative for Pathé. At the time of his death, Mr. Ouimet was honorary permanent president of the Canadian Picture Pioneers association.

John Grierson, died in Bath, England at the age of 73. While in New York in 1926, on a Rockefeller Research Fellowship to study filmmaking, Grierson was exposed to the work of Robert Flaherty. It was in writing of Flaherty's **Nanook** and **Moana**, that Grierson coined the word "documentary", a field in which he was destined to become one of the major influences. He returned to Britain in 1929 to make **Drifter** — the first in a long series of memorable films. In 1930, he founded the Empire Marketing Board Film Unit and, in 1933, the GPO Film Unit. From 1939 to 1945, Grierson was Canadian Film Commissioner and is generally credited with conceiving the National Film Board and giving life to the Canadian film industry. He had since worked in New York, India, for UNESCO in Paris, for Scottish television, and had been — most recently — a professor of mass communications at Montreal's McGill University. (See interview in Vol. 2, No. 9)

Jean-Luc Godard, still in precarious health following a serious motorcycle accident last year, has begun shooting on **Tout Va Bien**, the Dziga Vertov Film Group's big-budget, ($1,000,000) Marxist feature, starring Jane Fonda and Yves Montand. Co-produced by Mag Bodard and Claude Nedjar, the film is in 35mm (a first for Dziga Vertov) and is apparently intended for general release. Although reports indicate that the filmmaker is still feeling the effects of a series of major skin grafts, and a bout with hepatitis that followed his accident, he was reached by telephone and told our correspondent, "I'm getting better." We wish him the very best of luck.

The **Harold Innis Foundation**, University of Toronto announces a conference on "The Significance of Harold Innis" to be held at the Innisfree Farm, Otterville, Ontario, May 5-7, 1972. Speakers will include Marshall McLuhan, Melville Watkins and James W. Carey. For further information write to the foundation at 63 St. George St., Toronto 5, Ontario.

Eleanor Perry (who has scripted, among others, **The Swimmer, Last Summer**, and **Expensive People**) has announced that she will script and co-produce (with Martin Poll) **The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing** — a film which she described as the "first women's lib western".

Walt Lee has compiled a **Reference Guide to Fantastic Films** (science fiction, fantasy, and horror). Approximately 20,000 films, from some 50 countries covering a period of over 75 years, are included. Typically, each listing gives alternate titles, production and release data, length, credits, story-line, etc. This guide includes more than twenty times the information included in Lee's *Science Fiction and Fantasy Film Checklist* — which, published in 1958 at $2 a copy, sold out in a few months and has recently been selling (in second-hand bookshops) for as much as $75. Prepublication price of the new *Reference Guide* is $22.50 and they are available from: Walt Lee, P.O. Box 66273, Los Angeles, California 90066.

The University of Pittsburgh has just completed a five-year **study** that showed that male university graduates over six feet high average 10 percent more starting salary than men under six feet on their first job out of college.

CLASSIFIEDS

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FILM WANTED — 16 or 35mm raw stock film. Unopened or short ends. What have you? Will buy or trade. Filmex, 55 Maitland Street, Toronto. 416-964-7415.

Next Issue:

"The Epic Cinema of Kurosawa", plus
a comprehensive article on,
and interview with, Don Siegel
(Invasion of the Body Snatchers, Coogan's Bluff, Madigan, Dirty Harry), with an introduction by Peter Bogdanovich. Watch for it.

FESTIVALS AND COMPETITIONS

The seventh annual University Film Association **Scholarship Competition** has been announced. Winners (to be announced in August) have a shot at six different scholarships (four at $500; two at $1000), and will be judged primarily on the quality of the work they submit, either in the form of 16mm films or written material. Application blanks (to be returned before June 30) can be had by writing: J. B. Watson, Jr., President, University Film Association, Fairbanks North Hall, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire 03755.

The 11th annual **Independent Film-Makers Festival** is to be held May 18 through 21, with cash awards this year totalling $3000. Entry deadline is May 5. Contact: Doug Merrifield, Independent Film-Makers Festival, Foothill College, 12345 El Monte Road, Los Altos Hills, Calif. 94022.

The International **Film Festival of Locarno** will be held from August 3 through 13 of this year. The competitive section is reserved for works (produced since Jan. 1, 1971; over 60 minutes long; in either 16mm or 35mm) by new directors, with special attention to be paid to works produced in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Entry deadline is May 15 (films should be received by June 15). Correspondence should be addressed to: Festival International du Film, Case Postale 172, CH-6600 Locarno, Switzerland.

The Fourth Annual **Canadian Student Film Festival** (with $10,000 in prize money from Famous Players) is to be held by Sir George Williams University's Conservatory of Cinematographic Art this coming September. Entry forms and contest details are available at Famous Players theatres across Canada, or by writing to: The Conservatory of Cinematographic Art, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd., Montreal 107, P.Q.

The **Midwest Film Festival** is to be held at Michigan State University May 9 through 14 (entry deadline is April 21), with Rod Serling, Hollis Alpert, Arthur Knight, and TAKE ONE contributor Edgar Daniels as judges. For entry forms contact: J. Epps, Jr. or J. Jackson, Midwest Film Festival, Union Building, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich. 48823.

July 1, meanwhile, is the closing date for entries for the **Information Film Producers of America Awards** (held Oct. 18-21 at the Sheraton-Universal Hotel in North Hollywood). More details from: Film Competition Chairman, Information Film Producers of America, P.O. Box 1470, Hollywood, Calif. 90028.

The 14th Annual **American Film Festival** will be held May 16 through 20 at the New York Hilton. For further details: Ernest Dobbs, Educational Film Library Association, 17 West 60th Street, New York, New York 10023.

April 15 is the deadline for entries to the Fifth Annual **Atlanta International Film Festival** (June 16-25). Any motion picture (16mm-70mm), of any length or type, produced in 1971 or 1972, may be entered, and there is no entry fee for student films. Write: J. Hunter Todd, P. O. Drawer 13258, Atlanta, Ga. 30324.

The Ninth International Film **Festival of Short Films** will be held in Cracow, Poland from the 6th through the 11th of June. Documentary, popular science, animated, and experimental films of not more than 30 minutes in length, that have not already won any award, may be entered in competition so long as they were produced between Jan. 1, 1971 and March 1, 1972. For more details: The Management Office, Cracow International Festival of Short Films, 6/8 Mazowiecka, Warsaw 1, P.O.Box 61, Poland.

Closing dates for entries in this year's (the third) Canadian **International Amateur Film Festival** have been announced. Entry forms must be received before July 15, and films should arrive no later than August 2. Films may be entered from any nation in the world, and there is a $300 first prize. Write: CIAFF Box 984, St. Catharines, Ontario.

The first international **Festival of Women's Films** is now scheduled to open in New York City on May 31 (and run through June 15). About 30 different programs of films made, or directed by, women will be presented, and there will also be discussions on a number of related topics. For more information, contact: Kristina Nordstrom, 1582 York Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10028.

The American Film Institute has announced that it will award up to **seven scholarships** ($3000 to doctoral candidates; $1800 to masters candidates) to students who show unusual promise as scholars and teachers of film and television. Any U.S. citizen or permanent resident enrolled, full-time, at an American college or university is eligible. Deadline for applications is May 15. Write: AFI Education Programs, 1815 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

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NEW YORKER FILMS

The Life & Times of Michael Snow

In October, 1971, TAKE ONE Associate Editor Joe Medjuck conducted the following interview with Canadian filmmaker Michael Snow, in Toronto. Slight revisions and additions were made in December, 1971. The interview began with a discussion of a conference of Canadian Artists, from which Snow had just returned.

. . . a political thing rather than an art-political thing. Just the fact that a lot of fine artists can get together, and have some kind of organization that might have some kind of effect on the situation.

I guess that especially for a group of artists it must be very hard to get organized. If you see yourself as an individual it may seem like some kind of sacrifice to have to work as part of a group.

Right, but I think it's necessary. Like if you feel it's a crisis . . . It's not like the Battle of Britain, the bombs aren't falling; it's more insidious than that. So you do what you can, and it seems to me that the organizing of artists is something that can be done. We did some mild things: telegrams to Trudeau and Nixon about the Amchitka thing, and votes about the proportion of art teachers who should be Canadian. Things like that. One of the things we talked about was *Arts Canada*, and I surprised a lot of people by framing the motion that we suggest that *Arts Canada* should be on Canadian art and, to protect myself, the activities of Canadian artists elsewhere. And that it be as much written by Canadians as possible.

Does it try to be international now?

Yeah, for them to keep going Ann Brodsky has tried successfully to sell it elsewhere, and she's tried to cover more than Canadian art. I think it was reasonable for us to say that there are other magazines that cover what goes on elsewhere, and you can buy them here.

Do you feel a part of any tradition? A New York tradition?

No . . . I went to New York because I wanted to get out of me what I hoped was there. I think you're exposed there to a level of effort that makes you find out what's possible for yourself. The thing that made it possible for Joyce [filmmaker-artist Joyce Wieland, Snow's wife] and I to do what we wanted to do has a lot to do with Jonas Mekas. He was able to make a place where you could show your films to other interested people. It was fantastic, and Jonas maintained this thing. We'd made films here, but never with the thought anyone could possibly be interested. In New York it was a small group, held together mostly by Jonas. And that group disseminated a whole new thing about the kind of effort you could make: that it was possible to make a film independent of the movie business.

Do you still live in New York, and do you still feel a part of that scene, or have you left that?

Oh, no. We still have a studio in New York. I couldn't leave it completely right now. Both of us are really torn apart about all that. In a lot of ways it's so bad, life in New York, but yet in the last year or two in New York there's been a serious interest in what I've been doing. Which I've never really had before. So, simultaneously with wanting to leave, I'm now beginning to have an effect—in terms of influencing other people and in terms of recognition of what I've been doing.

When you have to fill in forms that ask for your occupation, what do you put down?

I say "artist".

What does that include for you?

Well, I'm interested in sound, and I've been a musician and I do do things that are just sound. And I have been a painter—things that go on walls. I still do photograph pieces and films. Sculpture too. I think saying "artist" doesn't mean the material you use, but that you do things of a certain kind.

Do you now spend more time with films than with other things?

Well, I'm specifically interested in film, really. For the last few years I've been more interested in film than anything else. But I've made films for years, and a lot of the things that were previously separated in my work have come together in the films. Like the sound thing was a separate thing for a long time, but in film there's a way I can use it with the image thing.

What kind of sound things did you do?

Well, I worked professionally as a jazz musician for about two years, '59 and '60 I think. Playing all over Toronto, on TV, and at the Park Plaza, The Colonial, George's, etc.

Do you think that you'll continue with films, or do you see it as just one aspect of your work?

No, I think that that's where it's going to be.

Does that mean you've been doing less work in the plastic arts recently?

Yes. I haven't been doing any work of that kind.

How did you first decide that you wanted to be involved with art?

My last year of high school I was awarded a prize; it was a book called something like *The Artists Handbook*—it was about how to prepare paints and stuff like that. Somebody apparently decided that I was talented as an artist, but I could never figure out why. I never did anything at all in high school. Anyway, I got this book and I decided that maybe I should go to art college.

Where did you go to art college?

I went to The Ontario College of Art. I'd just started playing music before I went there, in high school, so while I was at art college I did more of that. I took a compromise course called "design", because I didn't know whether I was going to turn out to be a commercial artist or what the fuck. So I started to paint while I was there but I didn't want to go into a drawing and painting course, because I had this idea that when you got out you had to have an occupation of some kind. Not a career, but a business. When I got out I had a job in some horrible advertising art thing, and I kept on painting and playing music.

Do you think anyone taught you anything while you were at art college?

Mostly it was a guy named John Martin (he's dead now)—he

showed me books of reproductions, and discussed the stuff I was doing outside of school. He wanted to see the paintings, and I showed them to him, and he said some beautiful things. He'd say "Why don't you check out Paul Klee?" and I got very interested in him. And he'd tell me about different things I should look at, so he was very helpful.

Were you still at the advertising agency when you made ***A to Z****?*

No, I went to Europe for a year, and I supported myself by playing music. I drew and painted a lot while I was there. Then I came back, and I had an exhibition at Hart House (University of Toronto).

How did that come about?

I don't know. It was with Graham Coughtry.

Had you met him at art school?

Yeah, he was in art school with me. And George Dunning, the man who directed **Yellow Submarine**, saw the show and he liked it a lot--and he thought, for some reason, that there was something to do with film. Anyway, he phoned me up and asked if I'd like to have a job working in film, which I'd never thought about before. He had this company, Graphic Films, which had a lot of people working at it. Graham was there, Warren Collins, Richard Williams, Sid Fury, Jim McKay, an animator who's been at the Film Board too. So I took the job, and I met Joyce there. That was my first contact with film. They did some live stuff there—that's what Sid Fury was doing—but mostly they did animation, and that's what I was doing. For a while I was director of the Animation Department—just before the place folded.

What happened between '59 and '63?

I worked for a year and a half at Graphics, but I was still playing and painting at the same time. And when that company folded, Joyce and I went to Cuba for a few months. I don't remember exactly why. That was when the fighting was on, actually. We left a couple of weeks before Castro arrived in Havana, so we saw what the Batista scene was like. Then I got really into working in music, but I was still painting and having shows and things. That was really a nice life, it was really beautiful—working at music, getting drunk, all that stuff. And I still had time for my painting. Have you ever seen **Toronto Jazz**?

Don Owen's film? Yeah, sure. Are you in that? I don't remember.

Well, I had a beard then. I'm in Alf Jones' quartet; we're at The House of Hamburg. In fact we play a tune of mine in it.

Is that what you were doing until you went to New York?

Yeah, we went to New York in '63.

How did you meet Jonas Mekas and decide to continue making films?

I didn't meet him for a long time. I was just digging what was going on around there, following everything, going to see dance things and everything else—especially music things. For a couple of years I had a studio that a lot of "free jazz" musicians—Cecil Taylor, Albert Ayler, Archie Shepp and all those guys — were playing at, because they had no other place to play.And then I made **New York Eye and Ear Control**, using a group which I chose.

Was the music composed especially for the film?

It was *played* especially for the film, yeah. I assembled the band, and we made the tape.

Had they seen the visuals when they recorded the music?

No. All I asked of them was whatever length it was of ensemble playing. I said, "No solos please."

How about that very brief . . .

That's Don Cherry, a trumpet solo. That just came from a sort of scrap piece of tape, from when everybody was playing around. And I hadn't planned that originally. I was going to have that part of the film completely silent, but that piece seemed an interesting way . . .

It fits in, and is really very powerful there. What sort of work were you doing in '63?

I was painting. It was in my studio that all these sessions happened. I did a lot of sculptures too. I'd started the walking woman series in '61, and I was really into that then. And I was making that film too, and that was like a part of the walking woman works.

What are the implications of the title, ***New York Eye and Ear Control****?*

I tried to do something in which the sound and the image had an equal power. Like you can take any piece of film and play any kind of music with it, and no matter how great the music is it will become subservient—it will be used the way Bach is used in some French movies. It's still great music, but it becomes some other thing because it helps to set moods and you don't hear the music any more; and I was interested in doing a thing where you could see and hear at the same time. So I made a counterpoint with the images—which were measured and classical—as opposed to this very spontaneous, very emotional sound.

Do you see this film as an adjunct to the walking woman works?

That's a long story. Let me try to track it down. I'd been thinking of making other films since I'd made **A to Z** but the occasion hadn't come up and the logistics were difficult: we didn't have a camera, and things like that. When I'd made **A to Z** I was at Graphics, and I used their equipment and Warren Collins helped shoot it. So it was sort of easy. I had been doing photograph pieces, documentation art-pieces. I did one here in '62, and from doing that I got an idea for a film that I wanted to do. When I first went to New York to see what we might do there in the summer of '62, I met this guy and somehow told him about the film. Ben Park was his name, and he was a partner with Hugh Downs in some TV thing. Anyway, he was really taken, either with me or the idea, and he put up the money to start the film. So we shot a lot of film—at least six hours—and it seemed really interesting, but all of a sudden he just lost interest in it. He'd just realized what he'd done, I guess. He still has the film. I really wanted to do that, but I went on from that and made **Eye and Ear Control**.

Did anything spectacular happen with ***New York Eye and Ear Control*** *to make you decide you wanted to continue with films?*

Both of the occasions when it was first shown resulted in riots. (laughter) One performance was in the New York Cinematheque and the other was in Toronto. It was partially financed by Ten Centuries Concerts, and they really hated it. They just couldn't believe how awful it was. It was shown, and there were about 300 people there, and then somebody wrote a review with a headline saying: "300 Flee Far Out Film." I was always sort of mad that there weren't 400 there to complete his alliteration. (laughter) At the end of the screening there were still a few friends there. My mother didn't come, or she would have stayed too, I think. And then, at the Cinematheque, there were people throwing things at the screen. I showed it, and Andy Warhol showed something that he'd just finished, and a lot of his gang were there and they didn't like my film much—except that Andy liked it and Gerry Malanga liked it. Which shows something or other.

How did you like the other films being shown at the Cinematheque at that time? How did the audience respond to other people's films?

Reactions were more violent then. There were all kinds of levels of things going on. There were people who could really dig it in the midst of the din. At the same time, there were people very violently opposed to things. People would try to rip the film out of the projector even as late as when the Cinematheque was up on 41st Street. When Bob Cowan was projectionist, one time a guy ran up and into the projection room and tried to rip a film out of the projector. I forget which film it was—I think it was one of George Landow's. Like I saw Jack Smith's **Flaming Creatures**, which I think is a great film, and the time I saw it there were people making just so much fucking noise. It was hard to really groove with it, but you could still recognise that it was a great film. There's not much of that any more, which is both bad and good I guess. I don't know what it means.

I find ***Eye and Ear Control*** *a very emotional film. It begins with the walking woman figure lying on the shore, and then that fantastic, bluesy Don Cherry solo comes in. It seems to me there are very definite changes of emotion in the film. Do you see it that way?*

Well, emotions aren't unimportant, but they're not the stuff I work with. I put the things together, and the emotions are a by-product of having done a certain thing. But I don't try to make you happy or sad or anything like that. In relation to that I'd like to add this: the meaning is not on the screen.

Do the images have emotional connotations for you?

Yes, but it's a by-product of experiencing that particular image plus sound, or whatever. Like that film was meant to deal with opposites, or supposed opposites. Fast-slow, city-country, etc. Like it's in black and white, and it ends with a black man and a white woman. They're the only two people you ever see together. It's a gradual progression of life-likeness in the representational sense, as far as the image

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FILMOGRAPHY

A to Z (1956)
New York Eye and Ear Control (1964)
Short Shave (1965)
Wavelength (1966-67)
Standard Time (1967)
Back and Forth (←——→) (1968-69)
Dripping Water (w. Joyce Wieland) (1969)
One Second in Montreal (1969)
Side Seat Paintings Slides Sound Film (1970)
La Région Centrale (1970-71)

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goes.
How do you feel about someone missing what you see as a definite structure? I mean, obviously I see the film differently than you do, for example.
I think that's perfectly valid. When you're making something you have to have something in your hands, so to speak. That's the way I work. I work with material and it interests me to arrange things in a certain way. That sounds clearer than it is. But I don't believe that I can calculate an effect. You can use my films to laugh or cry, and that's your prerogative, but I don't aim to do that. I think that's what I object to in most other films, and why I don't go to the movies. I don't like that sort of artificial laugh or cry. It doesn't interest me; I'd rather have it actually happen.
Aren't you interested in any films?
Well, I like Ken Jacobs' films, George Landow's films, Hollis Frampton, Joyce Wieland, Paul Sharits, Ernie Gehr . . .
Do you think you're influenced very much by anyone—including Joyce?
No.
Have you ever seen anything by Robert Bresson?
Yes, **A Man Escaped.** It's very good.
Your films remind me of Bresson to some extent.
Yeah. . .but I'd like to have even more distance than that. With **La Région Centrale** I really wanted to set up a phenomenon that exists in front of you, so that it's your choice, in a way, to become part of it or not.
Are you very interested in narrative films?
I've got some notes for things that could be called narrative films. I'd like to make a dialogue film. There I was thinking of the emphasis being on the sound. But I guess I don't think of that one being narrative either.
*Do you consider **Short Shave** a minor piece?*
Yeah, that's my worst film.
What does "worst" mean?
Well, I think it's pleasant, but well. . .you know that thing at the end where I sort of hold things up in front of me, that's part of a stage piece. That's sort of appended. I think it's relevant. But I don't think you can see that film very often. The other films, you can see them again and again, even when you know where they're going. They may even be better after the first time. But I don't think you can do that with **Short Shave.**
***New York Eye and Ear Control** seems to me to be an extension of what you were doing in the plastic arts at the time. Do you see any of your films that way?*
I don't know. I always try to work within the possibilities of whatever medium I happen to be working in. That's why I have a certain attitude about what I think my films ought to be like. I don't know how to put this. There are certain possibilities in a medium that make it a distinct thing as opposed to some other thing. And I've thought about what I think you can get out of films as a medium. And I haven't thought about other films so much as I've thought about, you know, they have this strip of stuff and it goes through a machine. But there are all sorts of relations. The walking woman thing was a whole sort of variation which is related to jazz. The theme and variation thing. And while I was doing them I was thinking that maybe a lot of the paintings I did should be seen in time—that there should be a serial display of the variations. That was one of the things that preceeded making **Wavelength**. This idea of having the variations follow each other in time is like jazz, or any music. *The Goldberg Variations* especially.
*Do you see **Wavelength** as an important point in your career?*
Yes, and it was important before it got noticed. It was like a crisis of all the things that I'd been doing. A lot of things came together.
How about after it was noticed?
Well, how do you talk about that? I thought it was great, and I thought **Eye and Ear Control** was great too. And it didn't really get noticed. I didn't think **Wavelength** would be either. You know, I'd do it, it would be shown a couple of times, and that would be the end of it. Actually, here's where Jonas comes in. I wouldn't have sent it to the Belgium film thing (4th International Experimental Film Festival, Knokke-Le-Zoute, Belgium, 1967) if it wasn't for Jonas. He saw it, really liked it, and said it would be a good idea if I sent it. Then it got the first prize, people began to notice it, and some attention was put on that particular work. Which gave me some encouragement.
How would you describe your films to someone who's never seen them?
(Laughter) Gee, I don't know.
*How would you describe **Wavelength**?*
I'd probably say that it's a long zoom. Which is what most people do,

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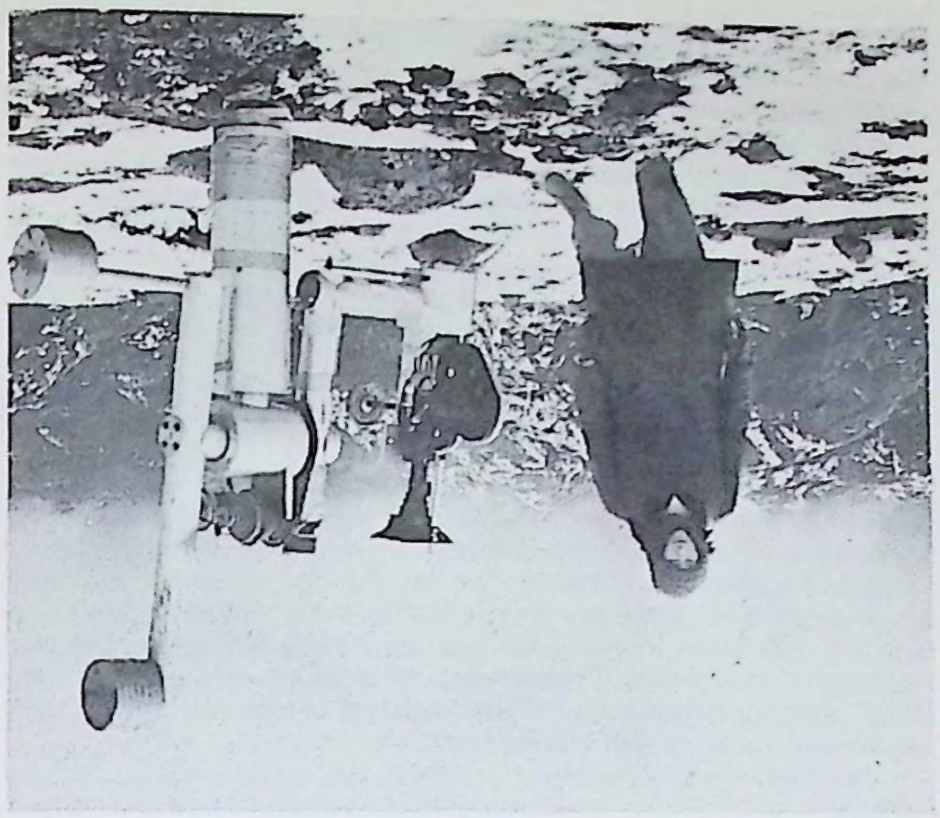


1 Wavelength
2 One Second in Montreal
3 New York Eye and Ear Control
4 La Région Centrale

and that's great because it's meaningless.
Is that how you conceived of it?
I think that that idea happened along with the idea of variations in time. But a lot of other things too. In '66, I guess, I had acid for the first time and that was related to it.
Do you think that dope in any way affects the product—what comes out of you?
Yeah, I think so.
Why did you decide on a zoom?
I don't remember exactly.
That was sort of a loaded question. What interests me about the zoom is that it's one thing the camera does that we can't do with our eyes. And one of the things I find in the film is the way the slow zoom questions the whole meaning of the zoom. I mean you keep coming closer to the wall, but the sides don't disappear. You do lose some of the sides, but not much. You're really changing people's perspective rather than their point of view.
I wrote a thing, originally for the New York Filmmaker's Cooperative catalogue, but it's appeared other places—this was before the film had received any acclaim—and I said that I had wanted to make a definitive film. And it's true. All that year I'd been thinking about an essential film. Like it's coloured light on a flat surface. And the material of it is light and time. And the depiction of space.
How do conceive of the dramatic events in your film? It's funny to call them that, but because there are so few they take on even more dramatic significance. I mean in the middle of ***Wavelength*** *there appears to be a death.*
That's the basic idea, but the original idea was even cooler. I wanted to have a body on the floor and have the camera pass over it. It's like the bookshelf moving in, which is really not so dramatic, but there's metaphoric connections between those boxes and looking out the windows and they're empty. And I wanted something that had some weight to be moved through the space. When you see the room for a long time, you lose the sense of how big it is, but when somebody traverses it you get an idea again how long it is. So the thing—the room, the space—gets flatter and flatter, which is its real reality, since it's coloured light on a flat surface—and then all of a sudden the surface is broken by this illusion of people, or whatever it is, that's moving in there. So that's what I was working with: the different kinds of realities involved.
So the drama is secondary?
It's secondary in that it was trying to position these things in time, and to work with the space. Then I thought about the kinds of connections between the events, and I wanted to have a range of connections. And this one thing, the phone call about the body, is a distinct kind of a narrative intimation compared with the other things. Besides, other things in the film, like the colour things, are also *events* and have drama.
Did you know when you first conceived the film that you would end on the shot of the water?
No, it went through a lot of things, and I've got all kinds of notes. For a while I thought I might end on a still photo of the opening shot. That was a terrible idea. We went through a lot of things the zoom might move towards. One of them was a life of Duke Ellington.
Were you aware of how the final superimposition would look?
No, and that's one of the things I've worried about when I've seen it. I'm not sure it was a good idea.
I really like it. I've always been surprised that more people haven't picked up on the idea: a superimposition of the larger image over the smaller which gives a depth thing, but I guess that destroys your idea of the flat surface.
Well, it leads you to the flat with a kind of a mirage. Sometimes I've seen it and I think I should have just continued the zoom. I like the supering too though. It happens other times in the film, where the zoom catches up and then the two images are together. But it worried me that I might be destroying the fact that you were still in the same space. But I guess it doesn't.
Is there much or any editing in ***Wavelength****, or is it all done in the camera?*
It took a little while, but I guess there's not much of what's usually called editing. I shifted things a little bit. In **Back and Forth** (⟷) I edited. Or maybe that's not the right word. I worked on it after the shooting for four or five months. And it doesn't look like an edited film. Sometimes the people cut on or off or the pan doesn't go all the way. And I'd include some things in some versions that I'd shorten on others.
Do you have a soundtrack in mind before you shoot your films?
Well, with **Wavelength** it was planned before I shot the film, because I decided that I wanted to have an ear equivalent to what a zoom was. Which I guess would have been a crescendo. But a glissando seemed more discernable. And I didn't know how to do that, and I could have used any way to get a glissando, but I asked around and talked to a couple of people—Max Neuhaus, who's a composer—and I'd ask casually, "How would you make a 40-minute glissando?" And he told me to call up Ted Wolfe, who's an engineer. I thought maybe I could do it with a piano, by sounding all the notes and running them all together. I just wanted to start at the bottom and go to the top.
So the soundtracks of the films don't require special electronic instruments?

Wavelength did, because we used a sine wave generator. Ted Wolfe made a little motor that turned the thing up from 60 cycles to, I don't know what it was, 12,000 cycles or something like that, over a period of 40 minutes. I hadn't thought of using something electronic. Any way of doing it would have been ok, but it turned out that it was electronic.

Was it you who arranged to have the music from ***Eye and Ear Control*** *released as a record?*

Yeah, through ESP records. I wanted to use the walking woman insignia for some company that manufactured things, so I'd be able to see it on trucks and billboards and things like that. For a while I thought we might get to use the walking woman for the record company. Before Bernard Stollman went ahead with ESP he was considering making it Walking Woman Works Records.

How would you describe ***Standard Time****?*

I don't know. Thinking about **Wavelength** made me think about using other kinds of basic film vocabulary things. And that was like a sketch that showed a lot of possibilities. It's my home movie, really.

Do you mind people calling your films structural or conceptual films?

They're conceptual in that they're planned. Some people—take Jonas, he shoots a whole lot of stuff, then he edits it. It's not conceptual, it's a whole other thing. I plan them as carefully as I can, although it doesn't always come out that way.

Do you allow chance to play any part in your films?

Quite a lot. I make a kind of container that makes fortuitous things belong.

Did you have any reason for picking the particular dramatic events that take place in ***Back and Forth (←→)****?*

Yeah, but it was a different kind of reason than with **Wavelength**. It was connected in some ways, in that I wanted to inhabit the place in various ways.

What is the place, by the way?

It's a classroom at Fairleigh Dickinson University, which is in New Jersey. I was there for, I don't know what it was, an artists seminar I guess. I was there for three weeks, or a month, in the summer of '68. Emmet Williams, the poet, Max Neuhaus, Alan Kaprow were there. They're in the film. Jud Yalkut was there for a while.

Did you have a special reason for titling ***Back and Forth (←→)*** *with an arrow?*

Only that it's a visual rather than a verbal thing.

Both (←→) and ***La Région Centrale*** *have a change in camera movements near the end . . . .*

I think it comes about 2/3 of the way through in (←→) whereas in **The Central Region** it is near the end. In (←→) it goes to its fastest speed back and forth, and then cuts to up and down. Then it slows down and finally there's a kind of coda which is all the different stuff that's happened superimposed over each other. It's sort of like your memory. You don't think of things in their order, really. When you come out of that film you don't really remember what order things happened in. You remember this scene, or that scene, and the feeling of it.

One of the things that gets me in ***Wavelength****, and in* ***La Région Centrale*** *is that, although the photographed space is quite small, because of the camera movement I can't take it all in at any given moment, and I find myself looking really closely—at the edges in* ***Wavelength*** *because they're always disappearing. And even though* ***Région*** *is three hours long, at the end I still have the feeling that I haven't seen all there is to see of the area you're showing.*

That's really nice, because that's something that's important in them to me—that there really is a lot to see. It may seem like it's a simple subject, but there really is a lot.

In (←→) it seemed to me that the dramatic actions you present are rather ominous. Especially the policeman at the end . . .

The film is really relationships—reciprocity. There's a teacher and students, lovers—the whole thing is action and reaction. Two people toss a ball. And somehow or other the cop enters into that.

Are you very aware of the rhythm and structure of your films?

Sure. (←→) is easy to talk about that way because it's about the speed of panning. It starts at that medium speed where strobing happens, and it slows down to a medium speed where you can more clearly identify and believe in the things you see. I think the slowest point is where the teacher draws the symbol, and they're all facing the green board. Then it gradually picks up speed again, until it reaches the ultimate speed possible.

How did you do that? Manually?

Yes, but there's a little trickery. I change the shooting speed.

Do you change the shooting speed in ***Région****?*

Not at all. It's all 24.

How did you get that sunset? Is that how it really looks there?

Oh yeah. That's all real-time.

It seems to me that one of the implications of a lot of contemporary art—maybe including yours—that one of the constant "messages" to the audience is that they could be doing this too. Do you see much of a differentiation between the artist and the audience?

Well, I mean, I'm specifically spending all my time working on this thing, and I presume that I know more than other people who aren't.

It seems to me that one of the implications of, say, Andy Warhol's work is that there are no artists. Or, rather, we're all artists. We have no art, we do everything as well as we can, and all that shit.

I would never draw that implication from Andy's films, because all the people in them are actor-personalities, and they've been chosen, and they've been placed. There may be a certain passivity compared to the way I work, which is theoretically more controlled. Perhaps it isn't in practice. Whether that means anything or not. But it's like any other thing really. I'm not very interested in hockey and if I watch a hockey game I won't see as much as someone who does know about it, especially a player. I've spent my life being involved with art, and I'm not sure what conclusions you can draw from that except that I think I know something about art. (laughter) There may be an argument that everybody's an artist, but some people don't seem to use that capacity if they are.

Are you interested in having your films seen by as many people as possible?

Yes. I don't make the films with a particular audience in mind, or aim it at all people. But I'm human too, and it might interest some people. It could be that something could become very popular, but it doesn't have anything to do with anything. They're not made for two or three people. It pleased me that **Wavelength** got some attention. It was satisfying attention, because it had to do with what I'd done and what I knew I had done. It pleases me and it wouldn't hurt me at all if a lot more people liked the films. And I guess it would hurt me if a lot less people liked the films. But it wouldn't affect what I did. Like it's been really not very easy. It's hard work being an artist. And it's hard work . . . it's a very interesting thing trying to do something that's your own. It's a struggle. But it's worthwhile I guess.

How do you feel about the audience response? I mean, what if the audience obviously hates your film?

I don't really like it too much when that happens. Because usually I enjoy watching them myself, and that disturbs me.

How do you feel about the audience being stoned watching your films?

Nice.

Have any really violent things happened during screenings of your films?

There have been quite a few things happen. One of them I didn't see was in Amsterdam. **Wavelength** was shown, and there was a huge audience and somebody tried to rip down the screen.

Well, we're laughing about that now, but does it bother you when it happens?

No, it doesn't really bother me, but obviously you can't really groove on a film when people are trying to pull the screen down. (laughter)

Is ***Dripping Water*** *the only film you've collaborated on with Joyce?*

Yes. We help each other, but there are no real actual collaborations. That one came from a tape that I'd made.

For ***One Second in Montreal*** *you re-photographed stills.*

Yeah. They're stills that were printed offset lithography or something.

You've made a film that I haven't seen . . . .

Side Seat Paintings Slides Sound Film.

Yeah, and this time I really haven't seen it, so how would you describe it? (laughter)

It came out of doing my book, *A Survey*, for the Ontario Art Gallery show, in February, 1970. And also the whole retrospective thing that made me look back at my work for the first time. I was interested in the idea of using the records of old work as the material for new works. The book uses still photos. The film uses slides. Not very many. And it's like a filming from a very bad seat of the slides being shown on a screen. It's a side seat.

What's the soundtrack?

The names, sizes, mediums, and dates of the works on the slides. You can't see the paintings very well. I mean, you can tell they're slides of paintings, but it's all to do with . . . it slows down.

How did you get the idea for ***La Région Centrale****?*

I'd been thinking about the idea for a long time. I'd been thinking about types of subjects. The traditional painting division of subjects seems to me to be still applicable—portraiture, landscape, still life, etc. There are good reasons why those divisions are still used. It's

like animal, vegetable and mineral—those things do exist. And I thought about how you could make a landscape film.

This is dangerous to say, since I haven't seen your next film yet, but it seems to me to be a culmination of your past films—particularly those since ***Wavelength.***

Yeah, I think it wraps up the whole thing about panning.

Does that mean you aren't going to make any more films about camera movements?

I've got a couple of ideas, but this one was so torturous to make . . .

The conception involved a fairly expensive machine, which you invented I guess. How did you operate it?

It was operated from a distance. There could be different ways. You could prepare the tapes ahead of time, and the tapes could operate the machine, but there's also a set of controls—horizontal, vertical, rotation, and speed for each one.

How long did it take to shoot the film?

We were up there five days, but it was supposed to be just four. We were left there by a helicopter. It's about 100 miles north of Sept-Iles in Quebec, which is about the same latitude as James Bay.

How did you pick the spot?

I spent a lot of time looking for a place with a car or truck. I wanted complete wilderness with nothing man-made, and we never could find anyplace. There was always something wrong. Joyce and I took a whole bunch of trips, all over, with a car. So finally I decided to narrow it down with aerial photographs, and we found an area that seemed pretty interesting. So I rented a helicopter and looked at the place. That was really thrilling. It was one of those small ones with just a plastic bell that you sit in.

You had to re-assemble the machine up there, I guess.

Yeah, it was really weird. We were left on a mountain top, and the helicopter went away. It was really fantastic. We had all this sophisticated machinery up there in this complete wilderness. We had a tent, and it was cold . . . Joyce was hoping to shoot something of the machine working, but unfortunately she never did. It was really nice just to see the thing moving around. Like if anybody'd flown by . . . .

In the film you can see the shadow of the machine. It's really nice.

It's nice that it happens where it does, too. It happens near the beginning of the film, where perhaps you need a clue to exactly what it is that's going on. And it happens at the end, too.

Did it take long to design the machine? Did you do that yourself?

No, I had a clear idea of what I wanted the machine to do, but I didn't know how to do it. Graham Ferguson, who made **North of Superior**, had worked with Pierre Abbeloos and suggested him to me. So I went to Montreal and Pierre and I talked about it. He came up with a set of axles that combined to make it possible to make all the possible movements without photographing the base. He's really brilliant.

The camera can move in four directions at once with it, I guess.

It can move horizontally and it can move vertically, while the camera itself can move centered on the lens. So it's like a bodyless eye—an eye floating in space.

Usually, with films, we describe what we see as a camera movement—we say the camera moved left, we don't say the scene moved right. But there's one moment in your film—it's in the second section, I think—where I was convinced that the camera wasn't moving but that the earth was spinning.

That's nice. That should happen, because that's the other way of reading the image. There is a reversal when you project the film. I mean that's one thing you can do with a camera that has hardly been touched upon—the thing has no up or down. And the whole film is

New York Letter

by Bob Cowan

Michael Snow's recent film, **La Région Centrale** is an epic camera exercise in which, throughout the film's length of three hours, we explore, test and document everything within the given radius that a mounted camera and machine, placed at a fixed point, are capable of. The programmed movements of the machine-and-camera are almost human in the manner in which it tries, via its cyclopian eye, to make integrated sense of the prescribed area in front of it. In many ways it seems to be following a primitive, ritualistic series of explorations and probings .... much in the same way that we, on landing on a far planet, might scrutinize our new unknown surroundings without being completely aware of where we were or what results we might arrive at.

With the help of Pierre Abbeloos of Montreal, Snow had his machine designed and built to specifications, and finally installed on its mountain location about 80 miles North of Sept-Iles (Quebec). Snow composed the camera movements and created an overall plan for the film. Abbeloos then worked out a system of supplying the orders to the machine to move in various patterns by means of sound tapes.

The film begins with the camera scanning and slowly moving upwards, followed by the sound of regular electronic beeps. There is a sense of timelessness. The first dawn. The first view of an unknown planet. A virgin experience. The slow rising of the giant eye (you feel as if you are sitting inside the camera, looking out of its porthole) from the small rocks of earth to the Heavens. The eye of collective man becoming aware of his isolation in a place where everything else has unity. I felt as if I had just arrived on earth from a foreign world, and was exploring it for the first time. (I wish someone would take Mike Snow to the moon and have him do the same film there.) The sound becomes more confident as the surroundings are scanned, and one circle is completed. A movement of the camera, clockwise, in complete turns and coming closer at the same time. A state of vertigo. Sky becomes land, land becomes sky. The pulse increases. The world spins like a top . . . a bouncing into space . . . a plunge. Sky and earth become weightless; they have the same lack of density. The image revolves at a faster pace, soaring over land and sky . . . gravity is destroyed. Between sections of the film a giant corner-to-corner "X" appears on the screen. The preceding momentum of the changing images seems to make it spin. The film then moves to close-ups left to right, fast pans, the edges quivering in vibration. Streaks of color. Perspectives destroyed. Flat pastel tones like paint washes. Next section: Positive and negative forms are reversed. Sky becomes thick. Land becomes weightless. The clouds appear as land masses (the way they appear as seen from an airplane). The camera moves sideways, producing vertical divisions, while at the same time panning in a circular motion and thence to a vertical scan. The clouds are nebulae. The mass weight of the land is turning; a monstrous weight; very little sky. Images now run vertically, closer and closer they come. We are riding an enormous wheel. There is constant struggle between positive and negative shapes for dominance within the confines of the picture plane. The weights of each (sky and land) become interchangeable. Struggles between aggressive and passive forms, perspective and flatness of objects in space, all undergoing constant change. Solid areas are concave, and cloud forms undulate in one spot. All depth perception is eliminated. The machine is comprehending more than we are. It is going through a state of ecstacy. Monolithic forms sail across the film plane as if we were viewing everything from the vantage point of a spinning ferris wheel, now vertical, now on its side. There is a feeling of entrapment and of being flung forward from your seat. As darkness slowly descends on the scene, the uphill-downhill pulse gives way to a horizontal pan of sleep. The landscape no longer visible, a white moon glides by, in ever increasing arcs and as it approaches it becomes a ball of swirling fire. As dawn slowly arrives, the camera swoops from sky to land in continuous motion, passing rocks and grass which seem to be encased in an amber-colored jelly, awaiting rebirth. There is a constant struggle in the mind to reconcile what the camera is actually doing with what your eyes and logic tell you that you are seeing. After a final burst of up and down plus panning motion, the camera travels a horizontal circle, a complete scan of the environment. The horizontal pan is combined with the camera revolving in clockwise circles. The spinning image becomes one with the sound, like a heartbeat. Sky and earth are blended as the speed increases. The image whirls by like the blades of a windmill. Finally the whirling blades become hypnotic and feathery. Earth, rocks and sky have been reduced to an image of pure power and speed. The image slows down, the screen is white, with the reflecting circle of the sun bouncing off the lens and appearing and disappearing.

If there is one main fault with this amazing film, it is its overlong length—which seems quite unnecessary. It tends to take one to exhaustion by over-repetition, and the overworking of some sequences. There really is too much of a good thing. However, its strength lies in its power to awaken in the viewer a real sense of discovery, and that alone is a singular experience.

meant to work on your sense of gravity.
How did you go about arranging financing for the film?
I don't know how I heard about the CFDC (Canadian Film Development Corporation), but I wrote the whole thing out and applied for a grant.
Did you get a grant from them, or an investment?
It was a grant. The CFDC gave me half of what I asked for, so I had to try some other way of getting the rest of the money. I spent a long time looking, and then went to Famous Players. Theirs is an investment. They want to get their money back.
Do you think they're going to?
Gee, I don't know. But they don't own the film. It's my film, and they get a percentage of the profits. The money was put up for lab costs. I didn't make a cent out of it. Oh yes, I did, I got 10 percent—$1,500 for my work or whatever.
So how much money did the film actually cost?
$27,000. They were all pretty good about it. They made the money available at the lab, and pretty well left me alone. I guess I have a rather peculiar status, sort of like McLaren at the Film Board—a kook who they sponsor. I don't think they expect to make any money from the film.
Have you started work on anything since ***La Région Centrale****?*
No, I have a lot of ideas, but I haven't started anything. I did a kind of video installation piece at the National Gallery in Ottawa. It was pretty successful. It's an adaptation of the **La Région Centrale** machine as a moving sculpture. The machine, with a video camera, is set in various motions. The path of the camera eye is shown on four monitors, and the audience is in the images.
Do you think you'll have problems getting ***La Région Centrale*** *shown?*
I'd like to get it into a theatre, but I can't convince anybody on the basis of any kind of commercial record at all. And yet, it would need some kind of promotion that I'm not prepared to do. And the fact that it's three hours long will be a difficulty. I mean it isn't three hours long because I wanted to make it a three-hour-long film. It just takes that long to have it happen.
What is the relationship of the soundtrack to the camera movements in the film? There seemed to be a corresponding sound for every movement.
There is. We made tapes to operate certain sections of the thing, but I couldn't use the original sound that was made to trigger the machine because some of it was too high for optical soundtracks. I'd known that, but I thought I'd be able to shift it all down. But that wasn't possible, so I had to reconstruct it. Originally, the sound was intended to dictate the movements. Actually, though, I was thinking about Bach: The *St. Matthew Passion* and that sort of thing.
But you would never use that on the soundtrack.
Oh, God no. But I was thinking about that kind of weight. I guess that would be my ultimate ambition, to do something that was as good as something by Bach.

END

A Note on Michael Snow, written in a Minnesota snowstorm

by Jonas Mekas

On my way to St. Cloud, last week, I got into the very heart of what the car radio called "the biggest snowstorm in four years." I was sitting in the car, stranded, for three hours, and I was thinking about my deadline for this piece, which now I was sure I'd miss, since I had promised it for the next day. The storm made me think about another evening, four years ago, at the New York Cinematheque, one very late winter night, after the regular show, when Ken Jacobs and Ernie Gehr brought Michael's **Wavelength** and a few of us sat there, in the empty theater, and watched the film, and were very excited, and outside was windy and snowing, but we thought Michael's film was the biggest Snow storm in four years, four years ago.

Later, on the plane, I was skipping thru *A Survey*, the book that Michael Snow did for the Art Gallery of Ontario, and I was struck again and again by the peaceful images of Lac Clair. Ah, I thought, that's why Michael Snow is always so clear: it's Lac Clair! The immense silence behind all that noise and movement and energy. Ah, we caught you, we know you: the silence, that's what it's all about. Like in karate. Or in tai-chi. Or like the film **One Second In Montreal**. A snow film so silent you can hear the snow fall. I have never seen a film so silent.

Snow. Water. Lac Clair. Ice Cubes. La Région Centrale. He sits there and he looks out, from that silence, and he contemplates, with a great distance between himself and all the rest, almost like a machine, but always looking at himself as he's doing it. (Erick Hawkins: "I watch myself as I dance.") That kind of distancing.

It's amazing how, then, by giving itself to the extremely physical, to the energy and the matter (or: to the energy of the matter) the film entitled ←——→ begins to mean not only "back-and-forth" but also "from the extremity of the matter (energy) to the extremity of the mental (mind)." When I watch Snow's films, I am caught by the clarity of their energy, I am pulled into the most intense and most subtle mental contemplation, a state ecstatically clear, and good. You can feel Truth when you see it. Beauty & Truth. Yes, when I think now, I have experienced similar states only while reading the greatest of the philosophers, such as Leibnitz, or Heidegger, or Kant. Or poets like Hoelderlin. That type of state. Philosophical cinema? Can there be such a thing?

Yes, Michael Snow, you ain't going to fool me with your pans and swingings and rotations and whirls and gyrations: I looked into the Lac Clair and I saw your secret in it. I saw your secret in the white porcelain plate of transparent water in **Dripping Water**. I saw it in the snow fields. I saw it frozen in the ice cubes. I saw you sitting on the bank of Lac Clair and you looked into it and it revealed the deepest mental reaches of your existence, most complicated rhythms of the heart. But the water didn't move even once, or, say, it kept moving the same and the same way, perpetually, with its millions of little waves frozen on a photograph of a Downtown loft. All that movement, all those gyrations, just to arrive to the point of Silence, a coda with everything superimposed at once.

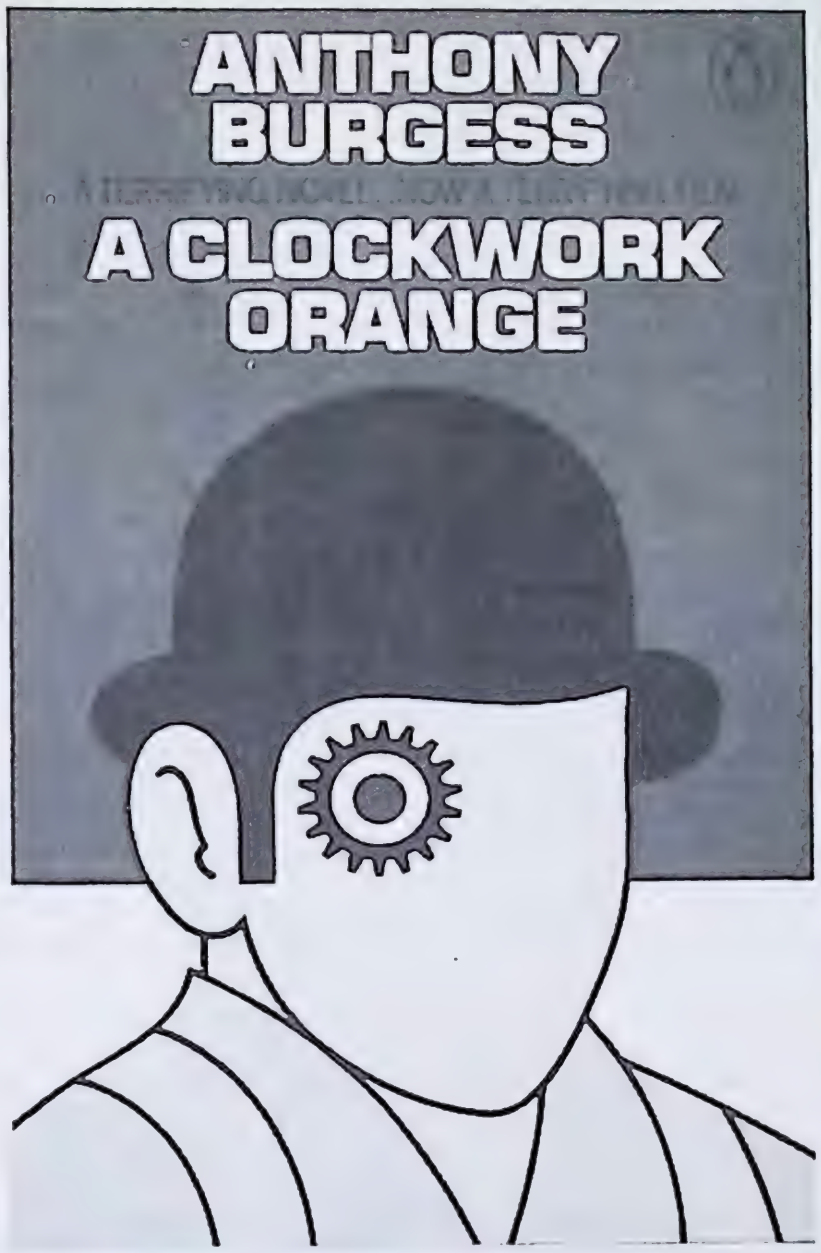
Philosophical cinema? Cinema as philosophy? Cinema as mind, as thought? We speak about sounds which become three-dimensional under certain drugs. A square University professor asked me the other day if Michael Snow made his films under LSD; he couldn't accept a cinema that transports one into another dimension. We speak about the alpha wave experiments, frequencies of the brain rhythms. Yes, this aspect interests me in Michael Snow's work, this aspect of how it finally works, the area in which it works. I believe that there is a Knowledge that can be imparted only thru cinema, a certain cinema; thru its structure, thru its rhythms, thru its pace. I'm interested in how it reaches our brain and the information that it carries. A philosophical cinema, a treatise on the essence of reality, that's what Snow's films are to me. As cinema grew, we said, Oh, now cinema is maturing, now we can write poems with our cameras. Later, we said, Oh, now we can write essays with our cameras. Or: we can write haiku with our cameras. Today we can say: we can write philosophical treatises with the cameras. A new key to philosophy. A new insight into the Final Questions and Final Answers. I can see, in a decade or two, Michael Snow's films shown (studied) in the Departments of Philosophy. I don't have to claim any prophetship to say that much.

During the last screening at the Anthology Film Archives (1971!) there were fist fights in the auditorium and at least two members of the audience were seen with handkerchiefs on their faces, all bloody, and someone stood up in the auditorium and shouted, loud and angry: "I know what art is! I studied art in Italy! This is a fraud! I'll get Mayor Lindsay to close this place, this is a fraud!" Knowledge is hard to take!

But Snow is not making "shocking" films like, say, some dadaists used to make. No. Snow's films are amazingly simple. When you don't know them, they don't exist. You'd never guess them, never imagine them. But as soon as you see them: they are so amazingly simple that you wonder why you didn't think of them yourself, long ago. He is so unextravagant. Remember how long he stuck just with the Walking Woman, he drained her out of all possibilities. Really, he took her so far to the limit of conceptual possibilities that she almost emerged through the opposite end of it all and began actually (almost) living amongst us.

...I scribbled all this in the snowed-in car, on my way to St. Cloud, in the worst snowstorm in four years. Ted was desperately trying to push forward through the unpenetrable mass of snow. Inch by inch we moved ahead.

PENGUIN PRESENTS



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FILMS OF THE REVOLUTION

by Bernard Weiner

In a renewed age of ideology, we should not be surprised at the large number of political films that are now making their appearances. We also should not be surprised that many of them are aesthetic, and even political, disasters. Few political directors can resist the temptation to slide over the fine line which separates high political art from mere agitprop. After all, the ostensible objective of the political film is to educate and alter peoples' behavior, so it is very easy to become too didactic, or to caricature the enemy in one-dimensional venality.

Even the best political filmmakers fall into this trap. Jorge Sanjines in his great **Blood of the Condor** (about which more below) caricatures the Peace Corps doctors in simplistic fashion. Emile de Antonio lays it on a bit heavy in his documentary on Nixon, **Millhouse: A White Comedy.** Peter Watkins in **Punishment Park** stacks the National Security Tribunal with stereotyped members of the paranoid white middle-class, one of the few false notes in his otherwise hyper-realistic film.

The danger for political filmmakers in being overly-zealous advocates of the revolution is that nobody will come to see the films other than those who are already convinced. The result is that the films influence and educate nobody, and the process of filmmaking and filmviewing thus becomes merely a circular rite of ideological masturbation. The right-wing goes to cheer **The Green Berets**, the left to shout "Right on!" at the latest Newsreel documentary from North Korea. The trick seems to be either to slide the political message into the brain via high art (as in, say, **The Grand Illusion**) or to enlarge it to absurd proportions via the microscope of satire (as in **Dr. Strangelove**). Most recent American political films, especially those dealing with the campus or youth revolution — **Strawberry Statement, Getting Straight, R.P.M., Easy Rider, Joe, W.U.S.A.,** etc. — seem to use a sledgehammer, but are just so much Hollywood illusionism, almost totally divorced from reality.

The only two fiction films by American directors that I find at all infused with integrity and honest vision — even if I disagree vehemently with their advocacy of violence — are Paul Williams' **The Revolutionary** and Robert Kramer's **Ice.** But perhaps they succeed because the former is set in some time-past of unspecified locale, the latter in some time-future — so neither has to deal with time-present America.

With the exception of Watkins' **Punishment Park,** foreign directors who make films depicting the political revolution in America fail ignominiously; think of Antonioni's **Zabriskie Point,** or the two more recent films: Giulano Montaldo's **Sacco and Vanzetti** and Bo Widerberg's **Joe Hill.** The Italian film attempts to demonstrate to the radicals of today that their fight is not without historical antecedents, and that the battle for social justice simply skipped a generation but is now flowering once again, worldwide, in the children of the bourgeoisie.

Montaldo makes an essential mistake by focusing almost all his film on the very complicated court trial. The innocence or guilt of Sacco & Vanzetti, in year 1972, seems somewhat irrelevant. The real message, it seems to me, lies more in the creation of the Sacco-Vanzetti myth, the various uses to which that myth was put, and the resulting drama of the confrontation. Montaldo only hints at that aspect in his admirable but somehow lackluster film.

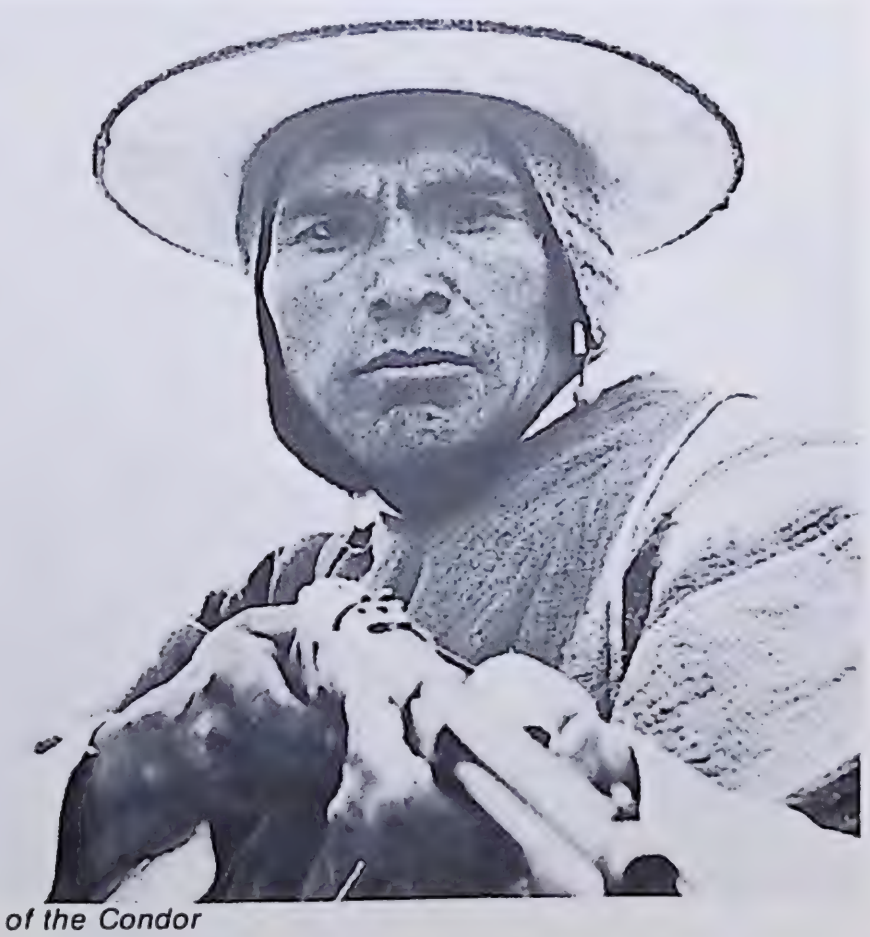
TWO THIRD WORLD FILMS

by William Murphy

Film enthusiasts, if their movie-going habits are similar to mine, are often titillated by intriguing notices of films from the Third World. Yet the truth of the matter is that very few of us actually have the chance to see and judge such films for ourselves. Theater owners are even more reluctant than they were a few years ago to exhibit European films, let alone those from "lesser developed" countries. Even the small "art houses," once reserved for the latest Godard or Bergman film, are catering more and more to the American art product, the personal celluloid statements emanating from what some have dubbed the "Hollywood New Wave." Consequently, at a time when Third World feature films are increasing both in quality and quantity, their prospects of finding audiences in the United States, except for the restricted campus circuit, are very dim indeed.

There are several reasons why this situation is particularly disturbing. For one thing, films offer an important cultural bridge. Certainly, advanced western technology has inundated underdeveloped nations. Films that deal in information may serve to improve everyday living conditions. Others, however, may indirectly impose alien Western values upon pre-technological societies which have already started to reel under the effects of industrialization and urban growth. Now, with the film medium available to them, under-developed nations have their chance to communicate with us directly.

In another respect, Third World films show the serious social possibilities of the cinema. For many of the prominent filmmakers from the Third World, the camera and the film are not toys for personal amusement, or escapist entertainment, but vital parts of the process of social change. Recognition of the social value of film im-



Blood of the Condor

FILMS OF THE REVOLUTION

The Swedish director, Bo Widerberg, with almost no factual data upon which to draw, attempts to re-create the myth of Wobbly organizer-balladeer Joe Hill. It is a pretty film, in Widerberg's typical romantic style **(Elvira Madigan, Adalen '31),** especially the first half — showing Joe, as immigrant and hobo, contacting the real "stuff" of America. But the film lacks a core strong enough to sustain interest. Joe Hill, *horribile dictu*, simply wasn't that interesting a fellow politically — or at least one would never know it from Widerberg's film.

The best political films, or at least the most powerful and exciting, generally come not from white America, not from Western Europe, even from China or the Soviet Union, but from the Third World: Pontecorvo's **The Battle of Algiers** and **Burn**; Solanas' **Hour of the Furnaces**; and two recent Latin American films: Miguel Littin's **The Jackal** (Chile) and Jorge Sanjines' **Blood of the Condor** (Bolivia).

It is strange, but not totally coincidental, that **Sacco and Vanzetti, Joe Hill, The Jackal,** and **Blood of the Condor** all deal with the calculated violence of the establishment directed against a movement leader. With the exception of **Condor**, each spends an inordinate amount of footage showing, in excruciating detail, the preparations made for the executions — of Sacco and Vanzetti, of Joe Hill, and of the peasant-murderer in **The Jackal** — two by electric chair and two by firing squad. In each case, what is graphically illustrated is that a system which lives by violence — the violence inflicted daily by poverty, degradation, discrimination, pollution, humiliation — knows no other way to deal with those who demand a more equitable distribution of wealth than to kill them. Radicals generally commit acts of spontaneous violence, or feel driven to violence by some sustained establishment atrocity — but the state commits legally sanctioned violence as a matter of technological efficiency, as an automated ritual in the name of the secular holy ghosts of Law and Order.

In **The Jackal** — which is based on an actual case-history famous in Chile — Littin shows us the terrifying results of a life-long series of violent acts committed by a brutal capitalist society on the personage of Jorge del Carmen Valenzuela Torres. He finally cracks and, in a drunken stupor, slaughters six people, five of them peasant children ("so they won't suffer anymore," he says) — and thus becomes an instant mass-media celebrity, to be executed in the name of the same law which commits violence daily against the bulk of the peasants in the form of exploitation and repression. "The Jackal," as the media dub him, thus becomes the scapegoat, savagely treated in the press so attention will be diverted from the real perpetrators of social violence.

A society thus stirred-up by the hysterical media and politicians is not the least bit interested in redemption of his human soul, or even in mercy, but merely wants its revenge. Littin shows how Torres becomes changed by the prison experience: he now has food, shelter and clothing, he learns the carpenter's trade, he appreciates the sports and cameraderie of his fellow inmates, he learns to read, and ingests the prescribed national history and the dogma of the Catholic Church. In other words, he is broken/enlightened (take your pick), and still the right-wing president of the time, Allessandri, refuses to commute his sentence to life.

The mass-media as a political force is treated by Littin similarly to how Watkins treats it in **Punishment Park**: in both instances, the journalist begins his relationship with the prisoner as the "objective" reporter, or even as a semi-accomplice of the system, but later cannot take the brutality and viciousness of the system he was sent to cover. In both films, the newsmen scream and protest as the executions take place.

The Jackal is amateurish in many spots, over- and under-exposed, confused in technique, trite much too often, and lacking in tension at points — and yet it is a most important and gripping cry of outrage. Seeing the film, one understands why more than half a million Chileans would pack theaters all over the country to see it and (what's more important) to participate in the discussions which followed the screenings — and why Salvadore Allende would come to be elected President of Chile on a Marxist platform of radical reform.

Blood of the Condor, too, is amateurish in technique at some points, but I ascribe this more to lack of funds than to any lack of craft on the part of director Jorge Sanjines, who otherwise displays a strong command of cinematic language. Despite its primitiveness,

TWO THIRD WORLD FILMS

poses a certain artistic responsibility. When dictated by a bureaucracy, such responsibility leads generally to artistic disaster. On the other hand, a filmmaker's personal commitment to revolutionary change may produce quite different results.

This is a round-about way to lead into a discussion of two recent films based upon such an approach. One is a Cuban film, **Memorias de Subdesarrollo (Memories of Underdevelopment),** and the other from Chile, **El Chacal de Nahueltoro (The Jackal)**. Both are serious and sophisticated works of art, though the Cuban film is far superior, even brilliant. But the main point is that they cannot be extricated from the political and social milieu in which they were made.

Tomas Gutiérrez Alea's **Memorias de Subdesarrollo** is an extraordinary film, one that works on several levels. In a sense it is a tragedy of Cuba's middle class as expressed through the character of Sergio, the film's protagonist. For him, the Cuban Revolution rings his own death knell, the death of spirit rather than of body. He is not political, neither revolutionary nor counterrevolutionary. But he favors the revolution because it acts out his personal vengeance against the middle class, which includes himself. Actually, his staying on in Havana is an act of self-flagellation. An ex-furniture dealer, he has no future there — no trade, no useful profession. The revolutionary government has taken over his apartment properties and pays him a pension. It is only a matter of time, however, before his own apartment — "with five toilets" — is confiscated, and his pension sheared to nothing. The revolution has driven his wife away, away from a failing marriage. She is a memory of the past. He sits and stares obliquely. He has lost the power of will. His middle-class individualism means nothing. It is clear that he does not fit into the great movement around him.

Memorias de Subdesarrollo works as documentary and as fiction. The setting is Cuba 1961 and 1962, around the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion and the missile crisis. It is also the time that the Cuban middle classes begin to feel the first pinches of revolutionary change. Many, in fact, scramble to get out of the country, "to go north," as they say in the film. Sergio sees his wife off at the airport. They are surrounded by tearful faces. Many leave the *patria* with genuine regret. The bureaucratic passport officials are perfunctory in their attitude toward the emigres. These shots create an awareness of the great social disturbance forcing these people to desert their country. Although this is a personal film about an individual life, the reality of Sergio's position in time and space is unobtrusively brought into the stream-of-consciousness structure of the film. Sergio's life is surrounded by the Revolution and much that is violent. Stills, pieces of memory, show victims of political murders. What appears to be newsreel footage, additional memory fragments, shows Bay of Pigs prisoners marching down a road, and preparations for the defense of Cuba during the missile crisis. A television speech by Castro, and television news footage showing American

El Chacal

however — or maybe aided by it — it emerges as one of the most powerful political films I have ever seen.

Sanjines said he made the film based on an actual incident he heard about, where a U.S. Peace Corps team in the Bolivian mountains was sterilizing Indian women, without their knowledge, when they came in for treatment. The film does work on that factual level, even if the story is not true (the Peace Corps denied the charges); but whether Sanjines intended it or not, **Condor** serves equally well as allegory. The Peace Corps volunteers could be the most kind, helpful and sincere humanitarians — which would have made for an even better film; here they are conscious racists — and the essential point would still remain: foreigners can, and do, bring infection, disease and social dislocation to proud, isolated cultures.

The Peace Corps was not asked by the Indian people to come to their village, but was brought in on orders of the Bolivian government, representing the same class which sucks at the sugar-tit of American aid and is anxious to "make it" in the world of international prestige and development. This cultural, as well as economic, U.S. imperialism is demonstrated well in the film as we observe the Americanization of the *mestizo* middle and upper classes in La Paz. (As an example, "outside" the film, that the Bolivian government pays fealty to the United States, the Bolivian regime refused to permit it to be shown. Violent street protests, however, forced a revocation of the ban, and to date more than 320,000 Bolivians have seen **Blood of the Condor.**)

As the film opens, we learn that the police are coming after Mallku, the leader of the village Indians; we don't know quite why. Mallku and several others are rounded up and shot. Mallku is badly wounded, but his wife Paulina (whose three children have just died in some mysterious plague), drags him to a truck which bounces him over Andes roads to La Paz, where his brother lives. The brother, who has tried to deny his Indian heritage while working in a factory, takes Mallku to a hospital, but the doctors refuse to perform any transfusion or operation until money can be provided to pay for the medicine and blood. So the brother walks the streets of La Paz, searching out ways to finance his brother's treatment. In his search, the urban professional class is shown for what it is: racist, materialist, anxious to shed its "primitive" past in its race for Americanized goods and "progress." There are flashbacks which reveal the story of the Peace Corps sterilization project, the protests organized by Mallku, and the eventual kidnaping and castration of the gringo doctors by the enraged husbands of the village. Mallku dies in the hospital, having had no medical care; as the film ends, his brother, having learned his lesson, returns to the mountain village with Paulina to assume Mallku's leadership of the Indian guerrilla movement. The last shot in the film is a freeze-frame of many hands raised with rifles.

In describing the plot so sketchily, I have been unable to convey the powerful emotions generated, or the grandeur caught in the visual images: the utter remoteness of the Andes village, as if floating in another time-space dimension; the majesty of Mallku and the dignity of his people (a radical cliché, to be sure, but done so expertly that one forgets this piddling caveat); the stoic loyalty and dedication of Paulina; the importance of "Mother Coca" in the Quechua culture (the coca leaves are usually chewed, numbing the mouth and stomach, thus relieving hunger pangs); the place of music, ritual and superstition (there is one fertility dance which, with its unearthly pipe-music and its cloud-shrouded Andes images, left me literally stoned).

American films about "the revolution" seem pallid when compared to works like **Blood of the Condor**. Third World films emerge not from the typewriter of some well-paid, intellectually liberal scriptwriter, but from the gut-level anger and emotion of an oppressed people. These Third World films are by no means perfect, and they tend toward much more sentimentality and didacticism than the white West is comfortable with — but we must remember that they are not produced for us. They are made out of the harsh reality of daily life — and their aim is to educate and influence their countrymen to the need for organized resistance to imperialism and further cultural degradation. **Blood of the Condor**, in that light, will come to be seen as a classical work of political art — a cinematic text for Third World revolution.

END

Bernard Weiner, film critic for the San Francisco Fault, *is a regular contributor to* Film Quarterly, Sight & Sound, *and* The Nation.

police beating black demonstrators, are part of the reality which surrounds the private, personal anxiety of Sergio. He makes no comment on these events. Yet we realize how they govern his life.

In **Memorias de Subdesarrollo** the references to a greater reality beyond the lives of the screen characters serve to put the dramatic and personal action clearly in the context of Cuban history. This is fairly characteristic of a difference that will continue to mark off films from the Third World from those of wealthier nations. Third World filmmakers do not have the luxury that would allow them to make a film that does not confront the actual political, economic, or social milieu.

Yet Gutiérrez does not propagandize. He is just offering insight into a mental process; he is not looking for converts. The hardships that the revolution will bring are evident. But it is not the superficial manifestations that interest him; it is the process by which the mind works. It is the disintegration of a certain mentality, where old memories no longer have relevance. The mentality of exploitation, as expressed in the Hemingway house sequence, or in Sergio's memories of his own whore-house days, is part of the past. Like Sergio himself, such a mentality has no future in the new Cuba.

Miguel Littin's **El Chacal de Nahueltoro** is based on a true story. It is about a peasant, born and reared in the rural poverty of Chile. In a drunken rage he kills a family of six, the mother and her five children. Juan is pursued, caught, and convicted of the killings. During his imprisonment he rehabilitates himself through religion, study, and work. He is sentenced to death, nevertheless. And while awaiting execution he becomes something of a media celebrity. The public's mood changes from vengeance to sympathy. Finally, strapped and blindfolded in a chair, with a marker over his heart, he is shot by a firing squad.

Though it makes a strong case against capital punishment, **El Chacal de Nahueltoro** is basically a political film which confronts the milieu of its filmmakers. To begin with, it is an indictment of poverty. Juan's crime is not an individual act of will. His crime is placed in the context of his entire life. Orphaned at eight, neglected and exploited from childhood, he works at menial tasks from farm to ranch. The slain family is also a victim of exploitation. The widow and five children live in a hovel. One day the patron assigns their house to another family, one with a working man. Without hope or future, the widow and children and Juan are evicted. In a deserted, wooded camp site, Juan slays them as much out of pity as of anger. These events are not unfolded in straight chronological order, as described here. They begin, rather, with the authorities taking the handcuffed prisoner to the scene of the crime. A vengeful mob listens in agony as he recounts the events.

Littin's method blurs the distinction between documentary and fiction. And what **El Chacal** may lack in dramatic qualities it makes up by bringing real persons, real events, and real conditions into the film. Together they symbolize an even greater physical reality. Some of the documentary devices include the hand-held camera, frequent camera movements (rather than straight cutting) and out of focus shots. Persons actually connected with these events play their own roles. The filmed interviews also add to the documentary qualities.

But to fully involve our feelings Littin must go beyond documentary. For example, Littin tries to achieve a subjective point of view with the camera. One would like to think that the point of view is consistently Juan's, but it is not. Yet Juan's visions of memory deeply affect our judgment of him. During the execution sequence, in particular, it is easy to be at Littin's mercy because he milks the sequence for all it can give. Starting from the prisoner's last night, he shows the stacking of guns, setting up of the shooting post, the pushing and shoving of observers, last minute efforts to have the sentence commuted to life, and the quiet but fleeting movements of the firing squad. And after the squad shoots, someone shouts, "He is alive!" But he is quite dead.

In conclusion, though each is extraordinary in its own way, both **Memorias de Subdesarrollo** and **El Chacal** underscore the qualities of socially conscious filmmaking that will continue to characterize films from the Third World. To such filmmakers, the world is a very real and powerful challenge. Screen characters cannot be free agents. Yet freedom of individual will remains an ideal, fatefully posed against the actual world.

END

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The Hawksian Woman

by Naomi Wise

We all know how idiotically women have been portrayed in Hollywood movies — most of which have been written, directed, and photographed by men. This has been especially true of the adventure genre. Since the adventure film (including such sub-genres as westerns, war films, aviation dramas, detective movies, etc.) is considered a male-oriented genre, women in these films have generally represented the most stereotyped male concepts of women.

While males initiate and carry on the action, women usually play a passive, and largely incidental role in these films: they are an excuse for the hero to get upset, or something for him to leave behind. Within the genre, "reality" is usually defined as a situation involving physical peril, and this situation is one that, for the most part, excludes women. Women function as "love interest," remaining largely outside the main thread of the plot, or else they are precious objects whose peril impels the hero to action. (King Kong is merely an interesting, if scary, specimen until he takes a fancy to Fay Wray.)

Within this framework, heroines can be further divided into two categories: the sexless, and the sex object. For many years, fair-haired virgins were the most common heroines. When placed in danger, their reaction is non-utile: they scream and/or faint. In a genre where reality is defined as danger, they are unable to deal with danger, hence with reality; this chicken-heartedness is the guarantee of their innocence.

On the other hand, we have the sex object. She is sexy. She chews gum. Frequently she speaks with a Brooklyn accent. And, since she is not innocent, she is allowed to participate, to some extent, in the action. Frequently she is tainted with evil — the fact that she can keep her head when danger threatens is a mark against her, for it proves that she's had some soiling contact with the real world. Sometimes, however, she appears as the good-bad-girl, and in this role she may sacrifice herself to save the hero (what else are "used women" good for?). It is her willingness to make this sacrifice that defines her as a *good* bad-girl; without it, she'd simply be a slut.

The work of Howard Hawks is remarkable as the single most consistent exception to these rules. In most of Hawks' adventure films, women play consequential roles; in fact, the heroines are, if anything, superior to the heroes. The good girl and bad girl are fused into a single, heroic heroine, who is both sexual and valuable.

Hawks began directing in 1926 (**The Road To Glory**), when the Flapper Age was at its height, and he came into his own in the 30's. Betty Freidan notes in *The Feminine Mystique* that magazine stories of the 30's and 40's commonly presented career women as heroines: women who remained independent, and to whom romance was a secondary (though welcome) consideration. Hawks' most prolific period occurred during these relatively egalitarian years, when the Depression and the war made it desirable for women to work. It was during this period that the "Hawksian heroine" was defined.

Her prototype appears in 1932, in **The Crowd Roars**, although she is still dualistic: there is a good girl, Lee (Ann Dvorak) and a good-bad-girl, Ann (Joan Blondell). Conflict centers on Lee's ambivalence toward her sweetheart's dangerous career of car racing, and on Ann's involvement with the hero's younger brother. The hero (James Cagney) is seen from the heroines' points of view — as a fanatic regarding racing (P.O.V. Lee) and as a bigot regarding women (P.O.V. Ann) — a rare viewpoint in the action genre.

The characters of Lee and Ann are fused in **Scarface** (1932), in the character of Cesca (Ann Dvorak), younger sister of mobster Tony Camonte (Paul Muni). Cesca is not yet the complete Hawksian woman, as she has no past of her own. Sheltered and protected by Camonte, and by the Italian family system, she's had no opportunity for experience. However, in typical Hawksian fashion, she takes the initiative in courting Camonte's buddy (George Raft). Ann Dvorak, a delightful actress who combines delicacy with a gentle earthiness, plays the role with such natural ease that Cesca's forthright, "un-feminine" course of action in no way mars her character. Like later Hawks heroines, Cesca has a sense of her own value, which enables her to go after what she wants without fearing other people's judgments. That she chooses to go after a mobster reflects on her environment, not her taste. She is the good girl and the good-bad-girl fused into a single, balanced personality.

Her role in the film is central. Throughout the film, Camonte exhibits an incestuous sexual jealousy toward Cesca. Indeed, his death derives from his confusion between women and property, since sexual jealousy stems from the concept that women are owned by their men. Camonte's emotional development is arrested and, like a baby, he refuses to recognize the existence of the wills of other humans. This allows him to become a murderer, and it kills him in turn. He refuses to acknowledge that his little sister has not only a right to her own life, but the will and intelligence to make her own choices.

Again, in **Tiger Shark** (1932), we have the good-bad-girl; Quita (Zita Johann) is a somewhat-used young woman who marries fisherman Mike Mascarena (Edward G. Robinson) for the protection and security otherwise denied unmarried non-virgins in the Portuguese community. Unlike Dietrich in Raoul Walsh's near-remake, **Manpower** (1941), she's not a glamorous figure, but simply a human one. She's honest about her motives, but since she doesn't have the resources to live independently, her choice is a forced one.

In **Only Angels Have Wings** (1939), the completely independent Hawksian heroine finally appears — Jean Arthur as Bonnie Lee. Like Lee in **The Crowd Roars**, she's attracted to a man (Jeff, played by Cary Grant) who makes his living by taking physical risks (flying mail planes through the Andes), although she's turned off by the danger itself. Typically, Hawks' heroines learn to accept danger as a natural part of life, in his later films, in fact (**Red Line 7000, Eldorado, Rio Lobo**), the heroine is frequently attracted to the risks as well as the men who undergo them, and actively participates in the danger.

This raises the central question of whether the love of physical danger is a *machismo* neurosis in a technological culture (where courting such danger may be atavistic), or whether, in fact, it's a healthy, natural drive women lack because of rigourous and distorted cultural conditioning.

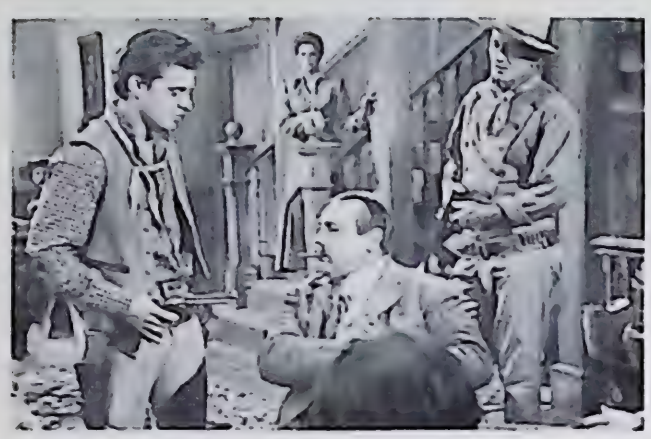
The typical point of view of male action directors supports the *machismo* theory, since it includes an assumption that the audience will be largely male, and that women viewers will be repelled or bored. In Hawks, however, this viewpoint is frequently reversed; in **Only Angels Have Wings** (as Robin Wood points out) the audience identifies with the heroine, sharing her shocked reaction to Jeff's stoicism in the face of his friend's death. For a change, the audience of an adventure film is given a female sensibility! But Hawks undercuts the "feminine" role as well as the "masculine"; one of his central (and running) points is that *someone* must deliver the mail, and Bonnie Lee learns stoicism within this concrete situation. Although her emotions are running strong, she stops fussing over them since fussing would be a liability within the situation. On the other hand, she awakens Jeff to his own emotions — he is finally enabled to accept his feelings.

Like most Hawksian women, Bonnie Lee functions beautifully in the human sphere — while tough and experienced (as a nightclub singer travelling solo through South America, she's obviously no fragile flower), she retains an untouched center, a fine sense of balance between human warmth and personal endurance. Unlike Jeff, she has no compulsion to prove her integrity by constant and exaggerated displays of toughness; her integrity has been fully assimilated as her *self*.

Jeff, on the other hand, is stiff-necked; the sensible prohibition against giving in to emotion in times of crisis has become generalized to *all* situations, and it's deleterious to Jeff's functioning. He nearly loses Bonnie Lee because he's almost incapable of showing his love for her — he isn't merely anti-sentimental, he seems to fear that any emotional response whatever will un-man him. Bonnie Lee finally breaks down his exaggerated stoicism, forcing him to admit that he is, in fact, human and emotional, and that it's *all right*.

Hawks' films frequently show a merging of sexual roles for the benefit of both sexes — the women learn certain "masculine" values

Right:
Rio Lobo
Far right:
Red Line 7000
Below:
Rio Bravo



while the men become "feminized". Frequently, the men have more to learn (and to gain) than the women, who are already mature at each film's beginning. (In Hawks' comedies, this situation plays a pivotal role, cf. **I Was A Male War Bride**.) The men tend to suffer from emotional blocks that keep them from full self-realization, while the women need merely to adjust to a particular situation.

This is attributable to the "experienced" nature of nearly all of Hawks' heroines. They're mostly saloon singers of one kind or another — good-bad-girls, but without the Brooklyn accents and chewing gum used to depict "cheapness" in Hollywood films. What kind of experiences define Hawks' women? Evidently, all the heroines have experienced suffering in the past (this is explicit in the films' dialogue, and implicit in the heroines' maturity); evidently, their sufferings have had largely to do with their roles as sex objects, since saloon singers are prototypical sex objects. Yet they refuse to regard themselves as objects of any kind; in this lies their special maturity and integrity. Since they are independent, self-supporting, and competent, their choices are made by personal will rather than by social or economic pressures. They can choose a man or refuse a man, because they are valuable people — and aware of their own value. While the men in Hawks' adventure films are professionally skilled (as fliers, gunmen, racing drivers, etc.), Hawksian women are professional human beings.

As a "very entertaining, nervy, adolescent new blonde" (James Agee's appraisal), Lauren Bacall (Slim) in **To Have and Have Not** (1944) is in many ways Hawks' arch-heroine. Aggressive, gutsy, sexually experienced (but not an *object*), with her John Wayne delivery and baritone voice, Bacall may be the most masculine of Hawks' female leads. In **To Have and Have Not** her characterization of Slim is remarkably free of sex-linked behavior. Even her name is unisexual, and in keeping with it Slim courts physical danger, rather than flinching from it.

Her past is similar to Bonnie Lee's: she's been knocking around the Caribbean, singing and surviving, learning to take slaps without grimacing. She, too, projects an integrity that's an essential part of her personality, independent of action and circumstance (e.g., if necessary, she can shamelessly steal the wallet of the chiselling Johnson). And, despite the toughest facade of any Hawksian heroine, she's not emotionally constipated like some of his heroes.

In **The Big Sleep** (1946), Bacall appears again, playing Bacall-via-Chandler. This is the first Hawks film to be scripted by Leigh Brackett (a woman; writing here in collaboration with William Faulkner and Jules Furthman), and in it the role of Vivian Regan (Bacall) is changed from villainness (as in Chandler's novel) to heroine. Although one of the film's chief *raisons d'être* appears to be to match Bogie and Bacall again, the romantic involvement between the private eye and the rich girl is left unresolved; a mutual attraction exists, but the characters are unlikely to live happily ever after. This casual resolution of the romantic aspects of the plot will recur frequently in Hawks' films from this point onward, particularly in the films written by Leigh Brackett: **Rio Bravo** (again with Jules Furthman), **Hatari, Eldorado** and **Rio Lobo.** Also worth noting, these are films in which the female leads become increasingly courageous and the romances even more casual.

In the 13 years following **The Big Sleep**, Hawks made a number of adventure films in which women play conventionally peripheral roles. In **Red River, The Big Sky** and **Land of the Pharoahs,** the chief function of the female characters is to cause reactions in the male characters (although **The Thing** — officially credited to Hawks' editor, Christian Nyby — does include a woman scientist as a major character, functioning both as "one of the boys" and as romantic interest). This was the post-war repression period in America; magazines were full of the familiar, soppy "women's stories," in which heroines "found" themselves only through love and marriage. The Baby Boom and Joe McCarthy reigned. But by the end of the 50's a change was occurring. The Civil Rights and Ban-the-Bomb movements appeared, bringing many women out of their homes and into political action. At this point, in 1959, **Rio Bravo** appeared — and the Hawksian woman returned at her very best.

Rio Bravo — in many ways a remake of **To Have and Have Not** — has a script by Leigh Brackett (her first for Hawks since **The Big Sleep**). It also has Angie Dickinson (as Feathers) in the Bacall part, eschewing Bacall's mannerisms but speaking some nearly word-for-word repeats of Slim's dialogue. This time the heroine is a gambler (presumably a better one than her late husband, who had to cheat) who also sings in saloons now and then.

Feathers embodies the clearest depiction of female superiority in Hawks' action films: she has all the Hawksian "masculine" virtues (decisiveness, courage, professionalism and style) plus the "feminine" ones (warmth, humor, openness). The hero, John T. Chance (John Wayne) is, in contrast, somewhat immature even in middle age. For Feathers, both men and women exist as individuals, whereas Chance seems to despise (and fear) women. Perhaps this is because he has lived his life in a purely male world; many of the film's comic moments derive from Chance's social immaturity, his adolescent proneness to sexual embarrassment. Chance's rationalization for misogyny is that his best friend, Duke (Dean Martin) was driven to drink by a woman's duplicity; Feathers, however, has an even better excuse for hating men (if she wanted one) — she's been hurt far more directly by her late husband.

Chance is probably the most stiff-necked of Hawks' heroes. While Jeff (in **Only Angels**) was certainly a rigid character, he had the excuse of youth. Chance is older. Unwilling to accept help from anyone, his behavior towards his friends is paternalistic to the point of condescension; he clearly considers himself their moral superior. It's Feathers' role to wear him down (and build him up) to humanness. First, she embarrasses him repeatedly — at their first meeting, for example, she teases him about holding up a pair of women's

bloomers to himself in a moment of accidental sex-role reversal. Then, more significantly, she makes him admit that he's misjudged her: because she's an uppity women, and treats Chance as no more than her equal, he had assumed, quite incorrectly, that she was "bad". Finally, she supplies crucial help during a gunfight by flinging a flowerpot through a window at precisely the right moment. She's willing to risk her life to help him, not in a useless sacrifice but in a calculated attempt to change the odds in his favor. Feathers proves her courage and wins Chance's respect. Chance is transformed: he discovers his own emotions and his need for help, and in that discovery he comes to maturity as a human being in a world where two sexes exist as equals.

Unfortunately, it's at precisely this moment where Hawks' sexual egalitarianism fails. Feathers taunts Chance into forbidding her to wear a revealing costume; this is the expression of love that she wants, but it's also an expression of the proprietorship of male over female. Feathers' body, evidently, now belongs to Chance, and can no longer be exhibited to other men. Although Feathers has indisputably proven herself to be Chance's moral equal, their relationship now becomes one of dominance and subordination. At her own insistence, Feathers takes the traditional subordinate position.

Feathers has accepted the necessity for Chance to face physical peril in his specific situation, and is willing to risk her own life to help him. In **Red Line 7000** (1965), there are three female leads, and they are actually attracted to the danger *per se*.

In a society where, outside of warfare, opportunities for physical risk are rare, dangerous sports draw a very special type of person. The women of **Red Line** haven't entered the world of car racing by accident. In earlier films, female leads were attracted to men who happened to be involved in perilous situations. Bonnie Lee, Slim and Feathers were only coincidentally thrust into dangerous environments; they weren't seeking them specifically. In **Red Line**, however, all the women characters have specific personal involvements in car racing; evidently, they have made a considered choice.

Gaby (Marianna Hill), the Hawksian "professional human" at her best, would like to race herself. Since the rules of the track exclude women drivers (although in real life this is changing), Gaby chooses the most dangerous of the men within her environment: Mike Marsh (James Caan). Mike's psychotic insistence that his women be virgins makes him *physically*, as well as emotionally, a dangerous man — he attempts to murder Dan McCall, Gaby's former lover. Excluded from actual participation in car racing, Gaby's derring-do reveals itself in her choice of lovers.

Another of the **Red Line** leads, Julie (Laura Devon) is first seen on a motorcycle — riding superbly. Like some of Hawks' earlier male leads, she's had more experience with physical risks than with human relations, and she foolishly chooses Ned Arp (John Robert Crawford), a success-freak, for her sweetheart. Perhaps the relationship between Julie and Ned illustrates the kind of past that the mature Hawksian woman has endured *prior* to her appearance as Bonnie Lee, Feathers, etc. Julie has no idea of her own value, as a person or as a woman. Sister of the team manager, she has defined herself, so far, by her skill in relatively "masculine" pursuits. A tomboy, she's been friendly with many men (taking a "kid brother" role, as Robin Wood points out); now, when she's ready to deal with men sexually, she chooses a man who's incapable of valuing her. As the film ends, the couple is still trapped in a false cultural ethos, wherein success is everything, and a woman is valueless except as a plaything for her man.

The third female lead, Holly (Gail Hire) reveals the possibility of a sick involvement with danger — and is the only Hawks heroine to exhibit neurosis of any kind. Three of Holly's lovers have died, and she shies away from further involvement with racing drivers, feeling herself a jinx. But what, then, is she doing hanging around the track?

The ingenue of **Eldorado** (1966, written by Leigh Brackett) is a reworking of the Julie character. Dressed in men's clothing and with a male name, Joey Macdonald (Michele Carey) is another female "kid brother." Like "the kid" in conventional Westerns, she's eager to become involved in physical violence, and goes so far as to shoot the hero, Cole (John Wayne) in a moment of hot-headedness. Later, she meets Mississippi (James Caan) by ambushing him, and it's only at the very end of their wrestling match that he realizes she's a girl. Finally, it is Joey who kills the professional gunfighter hired by the bad guy, demonstrating both her commitment and her competence. Since her family has been the target of the bad guy's oppression, she takes an active, deliberate role in opposing him. Clearly, Hawks has made his decision regarding women and danger — in his latest films, the heroines are as eager for peril (and as competent in dealing with it) as are the heroes. For him, attraction to violence is not a *machismo* neurosis, but a natural part of life for both sexes, and this is particularly evident in those scripts written by Ms. Brackett.

The Feathers character reappears in **Eldorado** as Maudie (Charlene Holt). She's an old friend of both Cole Thornton and his buddy, J. P. Harrah (Robert Mitchum), and her previous incarnation as Feathers is made explicit in some dialogue wherein she discusses her past. Maudie's role in **Eldorado** is small (though pivotal), but even here the Hawksian woman shows through — Maudie is calm, collected and aggressive, aware of her own worth. "I'm woman enough for the both of you," she tells Cole and Harrah, once again taking the active role in courtship.

It's unclear, at the end, whether Maudie and Cole will resume their old romance, and whether or not Mississippi and Joey will be permanently united. There's no final romantic scene to wrap it up; Hawks' and Brackett's interest is elsewhere.

In his most recent film, **Rio Lobo** (1970, again scripted by Brackett), Hawks continues to show women eager for, and competent in violence. The female lead (Jennifer O'Neill) shoots the first shot in a barroom confrontation with the bad guys. Later, she is only barely prevented from joining the final shoot-out by Frenchie (Jorge Romero), who's taken a proprietary romantic interest in her.

Another woman, however, takes a major part in the film's last battle. A Mexican girl, much oppressed by the villains, has sworn to kill the chief bad guy. After blasting him with a shotgun she breaks down, unable to take it lightly as the men do. While in **Only Angels** Bonnie Lee shoots Jeff accidentally, in **Rio Lobo** (as in **Eldorado**), the young woman's action is premeditated and deliberate. Like Joey, she is not content to let men free her from her oppression; she, herself, must take positive action. She bears the full realization of what she's done, and her tears represent one of the few instances in film when an honest reaction to a killing is shown. The sorrow which mars her relief reveals that she has killed for the right reason — not from hunger for violence, but from thoughtful, righteous anger.

While Leigh Brackett has written yet another archtypically Hawksian script for **Rio Lobo**, the film is something of a failure — partly because of pacing, partly because of unfortunate choices for the leads. While John Wayne and Chris Mitchum do all right, the other actors and actresses seem stiff. Jennifer O'Neill, playing a young woman who has endured many tragedies (I've forgotten the character's name), is supposed to be self-sufficient and collected. When she tells her story to Frenchy, he finds her attractive because, "You don't cry." Alas, O'Neill sounds as though she *is* crying. She plays the character with more than a touch of shrillness and neurosis, and neurosis is anathema to the Hawks heroine. Hawks' women are always relaxed with themselves, even when excited over a tense situation. At their best, they have an easy, Western style; O'Neill has a New York whine. In **Rio Lobo**, the Hawksian woman is surely in the script, but she doesn't appear on the screen.

As in **Eldorado**, the romances in **Rio Lobo** are loosely resolved at the end. Everyone goes off arm in arm with someone of the opposite sex — but how long the O'Neill character will put up with Frenchy's overprotectiveness is left unstated, as is the exact nature of John Wayne's relationship with the much younger woman whom he befriends. Romance has, I think, lost its interest for Hawks; other questions occupy him now.

If most action films are made for men, there's little wonder that women find them unappealing. Hawks' films, however, are exceptional. They include some of the most honest portrayals of women in any movies (most especially including "women's movies"). In addition, Hawks is truly unusual in constantly placing his audience in the woman's position regarding the heroes. In those films where the interaction between hero and heroine is a central concern — from **The Crowd Roars** to **Rio Bravo** and, to some extent, **Red Line 7000** — the audience sees the hero and his situation with both the sympathy and the annoyance of the heroine. Then, too, the Hawksian woman is never effeminate. A central theme throughout Hawks is the shedding of sexual roles in both men and women for the creation of a single, *human* role.

Women have very few role models to look to within popular culture. While I'd hesitate to suggest the Hawksian heroine as a general model for all of us, she can be very helpful as a guide for competent behavior in certain specific situations. While she is still far from the ideal "liberated" woman, she represents an important step toward that ideal.

END

Naomi Wise (aka Marrakesh Lil and M. S. Tripp) is a pseudonym. Over the years, she's written for grungy pulps, Rolling Stone, *and* TAKE ONE, *and has a hand in a book:* Double Feature *to be published this year. In real life Naomi was deluded by John Lewis's lies and foully murdered in 1608.*

A Clockwork Orange

A Warner Brothers Film; Produced and Directed by Stanley Kubrick; Screenplay by Stanley Kubrick, based on the novel by Anthony Burgess; Electronic Music by Walter Carlos; Lighting Cameraman, John Alcott; Production Designer, John Barry; Editor, Bill Butler; Starring: Malcolm McDowell, Patrick Magee, Warren Clarke, James Marcus, Aubrey Morris.

Kubrick at the viewfinder

If the number of reviews received correlates at all with cinematic importance, A Clockwork Orange *must be one of the most important films in years — unless it's just critical backlash from* 2001. *We received seven reviews in all, ranging from wide-eyed admiration to cold anger, and, when it came down to it, we couldn't single out any one review as being "the best". Krassner's was the funniest, but it seemed to call for Burks' review to balance it. And, for some reason, those two together practically required that we run Feldman's more strictly-cinematic critique with them. So here's a* Clockwork Orange *symposium: Krassner, Burks and Feldman. Let us know what you think of the idea — if enough of you like it we might do it again. — Ed.*

WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD MOVIE?

All right, here's a quick free association test:

— **Clockworkorange?**

— Violence!

That was easy, wasn't it? However, we must realize that, in order to film those shots of Malcolm McDowell (Alex) kicking the rationality out of Patrick Magee — yet sparing either actor any pain in the process — Stanley Kubrick had to build a gigantic centrifugal set. This doesn't make Jodorowsky more virtuous because a whole bunch of Mexican horses were actually killed for **El Topo**. But as long as the audience is safe, the violence is fake.

I once saw an off-Broadway play called *Riot*, in which a simulated riot took place, with people running all around screaming in competition with the mechanical sound effects. Still, we just watched, secure in the assumption that we innocent bysitters were immune. After all, if any of us got injured, the producers could be sued for damages, right? It would, to paraphrase an old punchline, hurt all the way to the bank.

That possibility was brilliantly satirized in **Hi, Mom,** a movie in which playgoers were subjected to great physical abuse and ended up praising the theatricality — although there, again, the violence remained something which rained only upon that kind of audience which was shadows on a screen.

In **Harold and Maude,** we are skillfully manipulated into unashamedly guffawing at the same bits which would horrify us in a different context: hanging, hand-chopping, drowning, self-immolation. Moreover, in the Committee's new review the concept of creative suicide gets loads of laughs. So we're jaded, and that becomes a challenge.

The thing that seems to upset people the most in **A Clockwork Orange** is when Alex is subjected to the Ludovico treatment to rid him of his ultraviolent tendencies. He is forced to watch horrible scenes on film, not as torture — remember when Al Capp used to force comic strip characters to listen to Nelson Eddy sing *Mammy's Little Baby Loves Shortnin' Bread* over and over and over? — but rather to condition him into nauseous restraint.

Kubrick chickens out, though. I mean, goddammit, I wanna see real vomit! None of this innuendo. If they can show pubic hair, they can show puke ick here.

Anyway, Alex is held in place by a straitjacket, and his eyes are kept open by surgical clamps. And *that's* violent, kiddies, because the audience knows it's really happening. Therefore we can identify thoroughly, knowing how dreadfully uncomfortable *we* would be in such an acting job. Those drops the doctor continues to put in his eyes are not just for cinematic effect, they're necessary for instilling good hygiene habits in this captured member of the Droogs, novelist Anthony Burgess' version of the Monkees gone madder.

Unfortunately for Alex, who, like Schroeder in *Peanuts*, is a Ludwig von Beethoven freak, it happens to be the *Ninth Symphony* that serves as a background for Nazi concentration camp scenes. Now that also happens to have been the theme for the *Huntley-Brinkley Report* that we watched on NBC television for so many years and, indeed, built up similar associations.

It's true. Every time I hear that music I get visions of the Chicago Democratic Convention, and ghetto children suffering from lead-poisoning, and strip-mining of Indian land. Oh, well, that's the risk of free will.

Back in real life, officials in California's Department of Correction requested $48,000 in federal funds to finance an experimental program affecting violence-prone inmates, involving surgery to "reduce electrical output from a part of the brain that is not working right."

Alex gets cured of violence, but the loss of sexual desire goes with it. He had not been limited to rape in his pre-treatment incarnation. There is that speeded-up *ménage à trois* scene, a little comic relief that has become a tradition, from **Blow-Up** to **Cisco Pike.** When I was a kid, I went to an all-city high school orchestra concert in New York, and when they played the *William Tell Overture* there were several music-lovers in the audience who called out, "Hi-yo Silver, away!" Now the Lone Ranger has been replaced by a common male fantasy.

In **If**, Malcolm McDowell asked the poignant question: "What I want to know is, when do we begin living?" The question for our time becomes: "Can we harness the passion for living into socially constructive outlets?"

Kubrick gave us revolutionary violence as a resolution then, and gives us a happy end-

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ing now — because Alex gets cured of his cure, as he imagines himself doing the old in-and-out without throwing up. Despite the fact that *Playboy* refers to this as a "brutal rape," it is the woman who is on top, voluntarily enjoying herself, and we are left but to walk out of the theatre wondering if this means Alex will turn to violence once again *too* as a concomitant to the love of flesh? That is, a tangible violence, not just the political corruption to which he so willingly accedes.

It is the yin-yang implicit in Gene Kelly's rendition of *Singing in the Rain*, a tune we have always subconsciously known to be connected to pain and torture, at least in a synchronistic way, just as the police sergeant dines on sandwiches and tea while Alex is being beaten up by cops in the very next room.

Somewhere in America there is an usher in a movie house who is going to murder the theater manager in cold popcorn. His motivation: employee exploitation. But the act will officially be blamed on the notion that he simply saw **A Clockwork Orange** too many times. *Paul Krassner*

REAL FILM TERROR

Embarrased to find ourselves at yet another high-gloss exploitation movie, me and the little lady almost left **Clockwork Orange** before The End. But we'd paid our $6 at the door, so we stuck it out.

I guess Stanley Kubrick believes in headlines. If you believe in headlines — or maybe I should say: if you don't know how to read 'em — you will also believe in a movie substantiated by them.

What the headlines (electronic and b&w print) are programming us to believe is that **Clockwork** represents our inevitable future. Gangs stalking the streets, croaking old folks for 27¢, that sort of thing. Etc. No need here to catalog the daily news horror stories about creep violence and the accompanying brave statements of politician-lawmen bragging about how they're smashing these punks as best they can, but they need more dough so they can hire more cops and buy tanks and cannons.

It's a war, ain't no jam session.

I think the creeps (including, progressively, some folks who are only *slightly* creepy; just creepy enough to meet federal standards) are going to disappear — out of sight, out of mind — before the stage of future history presented to us in **Clockwork** can ever come to pass.

The headlines aren't about creeps dominating the landscape by 1977. The headlines are about LET'S STOMP CREEPS. And maybe some freaks, too. What the hell, you have perhaps been ripped off by a speed-freak (or know somebody who has) and, you know, wouldn't it be far out to blast that cat in the chops? Lock the son of a bitch up and throw away the key, am I correct?

Something or other has gone too far, and it's time to draw the line. The screen undulates with real film terror. *John Burks*

LET US NOT PRAISE FAMOUS MEN

What you wanted to do was to go to **Clockwork Orange** pretending that there had never been a **2001**, forgetting for just a moment that Stanley Kubrick is the first American filmmaker since Orson Welles (or Gregg Toland, as the case may be) to play so beautifully with the goodies of a production set.

But it didn't work.

Not because of the off-screen publicity, cover stories, awards and such. One could accept **Clockwork Orange** as an excuse for the critical powers to do public penance for their cool reception of **2001** (the first Hollywood production to openly acknowledge fifty years of experimental filmmaking, to celebrate the fact that all cinematic vision is what Hollywood had so coolly referred to as "special effects").

Nor was familiarity with the Burgess novel any reason to believe that one knew what was going to happen on the screen. Kubrick, like Hitchcock and Resnais, has a damn near supernatural feel for where the novel ends and cinema begins. Who else could have filmed Nabakov? Who else could have taken Arthur Clarke's serious, serious science and transformed it into a mystic rite concerning ghosts in and out of machines?

In this respect, Kubrick has done it again with **Clockwork Orange**. Hollis Alpert can be forgiven his enthusiasm when he says that "it is doubtful whether any novel has ever been adapted for the screen as brilliantly as this one." And that's the very problem with the picture which is, as well, the problem with Kubrick at this point in his career — that the film is no more than the sum of its parts, that there is no feeling of the guts and experimentation, of the farrrrrrrrrfuckingoutness of **Lolita, Strangelove** and **2001.**

It is Kubrick himself who invites the viewer to blur his vision with preconceptions of what a Kubrick film should be. **Clockwork Orange** shows us that Kubrick has made the tragic mistake of finding formulas for the fantastic. There is nothing in **Clockwork Orange** that was not fully developed in Kubrick's earlier work. The man who gave us the journey through the star gate has put an emmigration quota on his tool chest of ideas. There is nothing so boring as a one-film retrospective. Consider:

Kubrick is at his best creating juxtapositions of sound and image. Yet in **Clockwork Orange** can we really say that the innocent 30's tunes that accompany Alex's ultra-violence are anything but the faintest echoes of HAL's swansong, not to mention the farewell tune of **Dr. Strangelove**? Or does Alex's rather overplayed infatuation with the *Ninth Symphony* of Ludwig Van begin to compare with the use of that ultra-modern interplanetary score *The Blue Danube*? Of course the music is crucial to the plot, evoking sympathy for Alex and hisses for the villains when Beethoven is inadvertently washed out of the Humble Narrator's brain. To deprive Alex of his music is like taking away Humbert Humbert's little girl. Like HAL's soul, Alex's love for Beethoven is something he never should have had in the first place — but at the same time, it's something he never should have lost.

As in all his films, it is the ironic monster in Kubrick that spends two hours focusing our attention on the spiritual dilemmas of the smallest rat aboard the sinking Titanic. In **2001**, the rat was HAL who, for all his treachery, was left stranded like a unicorn watching Noah's ark sail into the sunset. In **Clockwork Orange**, the rat is Alex. The difference is that it is hard to care.

It is hard to care about Alex's smallness because of the smallness of the world around him. Kubrick needs a big topic against which we can focus on his little people and their ironic importance. Desire for a twelve-year-old, now that's a big topic. World War II is very interesting. Five million years of human history gives you something to think about. But juvenile delinquents? Law and order? The morality of behavioral therapy? Our world is too close to the world of **Clockwork Orange**. In 1962, perhaps. Burgess was being a bit prophetic (though not much). In 1972, Kubrick is too realistic for satire, too disorganized to be surreal.

In Kubrick's other films, his developing sense of timing and motion was nothing less than inspired. In **2001**, when the motion was speeded up or slowed down, there was the feeling that the film's apparent speed was merely keeping up with its tempo. The slow motion shots, for instance, were shots of action that demanded to be taken slowly (eg., the floating spacemen in zero gravity). In **Clockwork Orange**, the slow motion scene seems disconnected from the rest of the film: it seems pointless. Does the slow motion of Alex's attack on his droogs highlight the swift sureness of the act? If so, why should that act in particular be swift and sure? Or are we merely masturbating some visual interest? (Would Leni Riefenstahl be impressed watching Dim topple into the housing project's pool?) And what of the high speed teenybopper bang? To the *William Tell Overture*? Silly and out of place — a way, it seemed, to dispose of a scene that had lost its importance in Kubrick's reworking of the novel.

I was struck by how bored and destructive Kubrick seemed, as if he himself had drawn the obscene graffitti over the WPA mural. Unfortunately, the things he seems to be destroying are the achievements of his other films. The portrayal of the paralyzed writer denegrates both Strangelove and the aged Bowman at the end of **2001**. The dull joke of the poisoned wine glass insults the exquisitely religious glass breaking of that same scene is **2001**. Within **Clockwork Orange** itself, the writer's doorbell playing Beethoven is a deliberate undercutting of any pathos that might be evoked by Alex and his music. And the placing of the **2001** album at the very apex of the teeny-boppers' record boutique is duly noted, and best forgotten.

Clockwork Orange is really a like sad and weepy story, O my brothers. It is about an *auteur* who seems to have shot his wad (understandably enough, the state of the *auteur* theorist in 1972 is such that he did not like the film). And he is a good *auteur*, too — **Clockwork Orange** aside, the best American one around. The problem is that *auteurs* are stuck with the dilemma of having done it before (something which Roehmer gleefully spoofs by doing it all again and again). Kubrick seems to be at an impasse. If **Clockwork Orange** was a serious effort (something more than a potboiler for the benefit of repentant critics), it tells us that Kubrick is not yet ready to harness his past progress to his future ideas. In **2001**, he contemplated man going beyond his tools. In **Clockwork Orange**, Kubrick is merely contemplating his tools. *Seth Feldman*

The latest in a long series of journalistic incarnations finds John Burks holding down a job as investigative reporter for the San Francisco Examiner. *Previously, he was Editor-In-Chief of* Flash, *Managing Editor of* Rags *and* Rolling Stone, *and a jazz drummer.*

Seth Feldman teaches a theory-of-film course at the State University of New York at Buffalo, and is writing a dissertation on the Russian documentary filmmaker Dziga Vertov. Mr. Feldman also makes films that he describes as "of personal and local interest."

THE LAST PICTURE SHOW

Directed by Peter Bogdanovich Screenplay by Larry McMurtry and Peter Bogdanovich; Based on the novel by Larry McMurtry; Director of Photography, Robert Surtees; With Timothy Bottoms, Jeff Bridges, Ben Johnson, Cloris Leachman, Ellen Burstyn, Eileen Brennan, Clu Galager, Cybill Shepherd, Sam Bottoms, Randy Quaid, Sharon Taggart, Joe Heathcock, A BBS Production; Released by Columbia Pictures; Black and white, 118 minutes.

First of all, **The Last Picture Show** is NOT **Citizen Kane; Targets** is **Citizen Kane**. I'll get back to this.

But once that's been said, what is there left to say about **The Last Picture Show** that hasn't already been said? With everybody raving about it, with nearly every critic digging around for superlatives he or she hasn't used lately, with even the super-hip critics starting out: "Well, I have to admit . . ." I mean, this is a certified, double-your-money-back-if-not-satisfied MAJOR FILM. Not even MAJOR MOVIE, but MAJOR FILM.

I've tried to find something wrong with it; but there it is, and it *is* a major film, and a masterpiece, and everything it's cracked up to be.

But not as exciting as **Targets**.

Here are some starting points. **Picture Show** is a film critic's film (made by a film critic, that is).

Picture Show is inextricably linked to Howard Hawks' **Red River** (which, as it happens, is the last picture show referred to in the title).

Picture Show's greatest strength, and greatest weakness, is its attention to detail.

What do Howard Hawks, **Red River**, Ben Johnson, Robert Surtees, black and white photography and **Targets** (Bogdanovich's first film, made in 1967) have in common? They all pertain to the fact that nearly all the material in **Picture Show** is focussed through a lens of other movies, other times; the film is one gigantic film reference.

Which should surprise no one, Bogdanovich being a major film critic as well as a major film maker. First of all, he knows who Howard Hawks is. And knowing that, he knows about **Red River.**

Hawks, of course, is one of the greatest American film makers. Along with John Ford (the only other filmmaker in his class) he has defined and chronicled the American ambience for nearly 30 years. Hawks is a major artist, and Bogdanovich loves him. Not only did he write a monograph on Hawks for the Museum of Modern Art, but a Hawks movie has been central to both his films (it's **The Criminal Code** in **Targets**).

Red River is generally acknowledged to be Hawks' greatest film. Made in 1948, and starring John Wayne and Montgomery Clift, it's such a relentlessly honest philosophical essay that it may eventually be placed in the same category as *Moby Dick* in that (although it deals with different matters, and uses different techniques) it goes directly to the heart of the American contradiction, the American dilemma. Set in 1840, **Red River** tells of the first great cattle drive up the Chisholm Trail from Texas to Kansas — one of the richest sagas of America's youth. It's an epic film, a film that deals in heroism, courage, the ability to make decisions and act on them — virtues that conquered the vastness of the frontier. Yet at the same time that it glorifies these pioneer virtues of young men and young countries, it shows us how, eventually, these qualities can (must?) lead to fascism, brutality, repression and evil. It's a heavy film, and if you haven't seen it lately you ought to.

It's magnificently appropriate that the last picture show should be **Red River**. Not only because **Red River** is about the Texas of an earlier, braver day; not only because the cinema typified by Hawks is linked to the last days of America's youth; but because **Red River**, like **Picture Show**, is basically about the need for an ethic. The frontier may be gone, and the epic adventure be at an end, but the need for a consistent ethic is just as central now as it was in 1840. Sonny Crawford, the main character of **Picture Show**, comes of age when he realizes this.

Inasmuch as **Red River** is about the beginning of the American epic, and **Picture Show** is about the end, it would seem that part of Bogdanovich's point is that the times they are a-changin', and not for the better. Sam the Lion, who stands in Bogdanovich's film as the exemplar of the Hawks/Ford ethic of kindness, pride and individual responsibility (he owns the movie theatre!) is the town's ethical center, its last defense against the encroaching lousy 50's. When he dies, halfway through the film, the town crumbles. "Nothing's gone right since Sam the Lion died," says Jacy's mother. It would be a grim view, except that Sam the Lion seems to have gotten through to Sonny Crawford — who will, we expect, take Sam's place. It's no accident that Sam wills his pool hall to Sonny. The bequest goes much further, though; it includes responsibility for internalizing and carrying on Sam's ideas about what constitutes a worthy human being.

("Western" ethics are put down these days — possibly because they are so frequently embodied by John Wayne, a fascist. But despite our automatic antipathy toward Wayne as a man, it's a mistake to reject those ethical standards too quickly. Courage, honesty, determination and individual responsibility are a revolutionary's virtues too — they are timeless, and will always be necessary for the accomplishment of any great undertaking.)

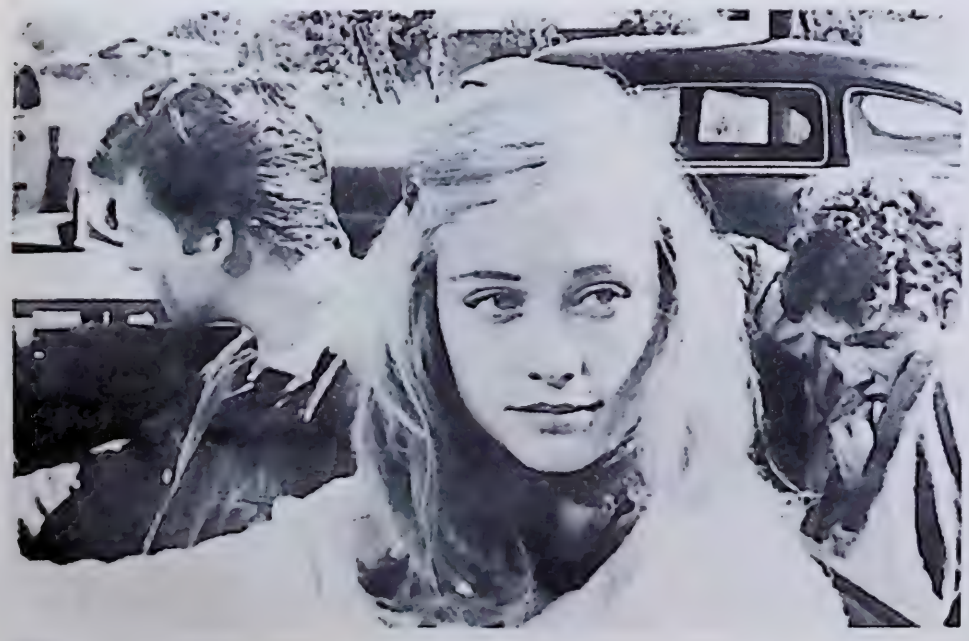
It's no accident, either, that Sam the Lion is played by Ben Johnson — one of Ford's favorite actors (**She Wore A Yellow Ribbon**, **Wagon Master**, **Rio Grande**, **Cheyenne Autumn**), and one of those familiar Western faces.

Bogdanovich is familiar with the resonance effect that occurs when you use a familiar actor (or shot, musical theme, line of dialogue) in a movie. Using Johnson for the part of Sam the Lion keys in all the familiar associations that go along with John Ford western heroes — strength, warmth, reliability, earthiness — and it's just what the part needs.

Robert Surtees, Bogdanovich's Director of Photography, is another inspired choice. Surtees is a Hollywood old-timer (he worked with Ford on **Mogambo**), and the classical look of **Picture Show** owes much to his experienced eye. The black and white photography works to the same end — reminding us of other films and other times. It's quite a struggle these days to make a film in black and white. Bogdanovich put up a fight and won, and the result proves him completely right. In a film *about* film, the filmic details must be exactly correct or the whole thing falls to pieces.

Bogdanovich hasn't missed a trick. *All* the details are right, from the music (mostly wonderful, vintage Hank Williams) to those pointy 50's bras, to an incredibly picayune (but lovely) point that comes up when Sonny remarks of **Red River** that he's seen it before (this because **Red River** was released in '48, **Picture Show** takes place in '51, and Bogdanovich simply *has* to touch all the bases).

This remarkable attention to detail is highly novelistic and points out a curiosity about the film: that its structure isn't really very filmic. Taking off from McMurtry's *bildungsroman* (a novel of education, that takes a character from some point in his or her youth to the beginning of adulthood), Bogdanovich has made a truly novelistic film: novels pay as much attention to their



background setting as to their leading characters, and there can be no doubt that the care with which time and place are drawn in **Picture Show** is central to the film's success.

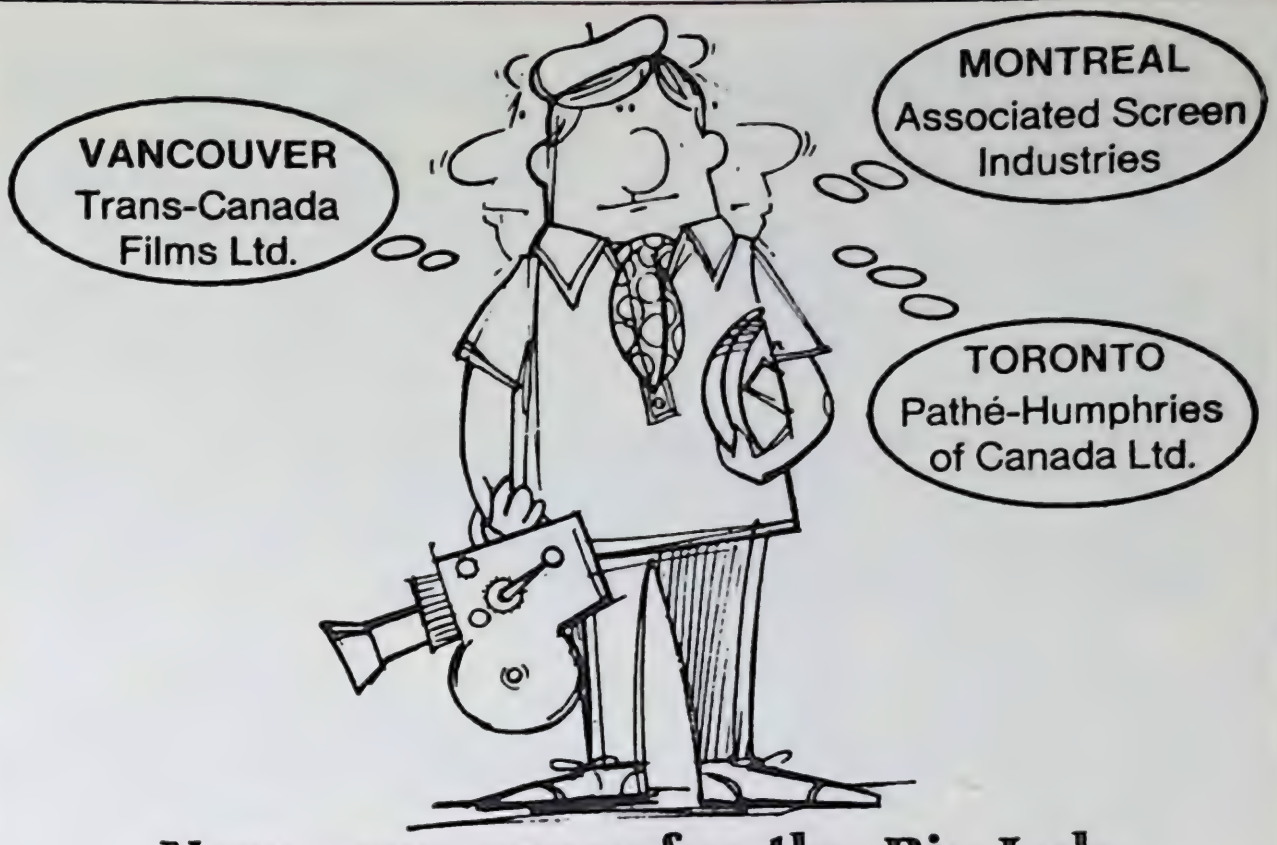
But by opting for the carefully delineated detail and rich background, Bogdanovich has (purposely, I'm sure) given up the option of making the kind of knockout, breath-taking film that, for instance, Welles made in **Citizen Kane**. **Picture Show** is a *careful* film, and although in many ways it's a deeper, more mature work than **Targets**, it lacks something of that film's excitement.

Targets was a mind-blower of a film. You sat there with your mouth hanging open, going, "Wow!" **Targets** is one of the most impressive first-films ever to come out of Hollywood — a pyrotechnic tour-de-force, spinning off brilliant directorial touches like sparks from a pinwheel. It's about film, too — there's a long sequence from Hawks' **Criminal Code**, a sub-plot dealing with Karloff playing Karloff, and a stunning ending involving a sniper, a drive-in theater, a dead projectionist, film running through a projector, and Boris Karloff. Bogdanovich even plays a supporting role as a young film writer, and he's great. It's a killer movie.

Citizen Kane, anyone? As a matter of fact, that's just about the only film to which **Targets** can be legitimately compared. But **Targets** was an "exploitation film," and serious critics don't pay any attention to *them*. So it died a rapid, unlamented death, and only a few people noticed the debut of a major filmmaking talent. **Picture Show** is a sure-enough masterpiece, but I didn't go "Wow!" even once.

Welles went on to make better films than **Kane**, and Bogdanovich will undoubtedly go on to better both **Targets** and **Picture Show**. But, for the moment, on your way to the theater, let me suggest that if you go expecting **Citizen Kane** you may be disappointed. **Ambersons**, maybe; **Kane**, never!

Michael Goodwin



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SUCH GOOD FRIENDS

Paramount Pictures Release; Produced and Directed by Otto Preminger; Director of Photography, Gayne Rescher; Screenplay by Esther Dale, from the novel by Lois Gould; Music, Thomas Z. Shepard; Editor, Harry Howard; Production Design, Rouben Ter-Arutunian; Cast: Dyan Cannon, James Coco, Jennifer O'Neill, Ken Howard, Nina Foch, Burgess Meredith, Lawrence Luckinbill.

Listen, it's fun being at a sophisticated Manhattan East Side theater sneak. The audience is very hip. In the ad, it says that our sneak was 'adapted from a best-seller" so the hush is on . . . mumble, mumble . . . that it will be **The Godfather**, which I think would be nice. But I keep getting hints of other possibilities. Like well-dressed people (publicists?) accompanying levi-dressed people (stars?) to special roped seats . . . saying things to ushers like "The Preminger party please."

Such Good Friends

What has silly old Otto done now? Oh my God, just as the curtain opens and the house goes dark, I remember. **Such Good Friends**.

The archetypal New York Jewish Novel about a sexually inquisitive, uninhibited, but, alas, unfulfilled American Jewish Princess who has married a dying American Jewish Prince. So who does Otto cast as Julie Wall-

man Messinger? The archetypal shicksa Dyan Cannon, but of course. A *body* she has. *And that is all.* She is so unconvincing as Lois Gould's anti-heroine that she makes the entire film an uninteresting lie.

And that's a shame, because this true account of a major hospital's fatal blunder should have been put into better hands. A John Schlesinger, or even a Richard Brooks, could have saved this. An Otto Preminger . . . well, folks, we remember **Hurry Sundown**, don't we? And **Skidoo**?

Otto's symbolism not only clubs you over the head, it kicks you in the tummy. For openers, there's a scene with Burgess Meredith, all 65 years of him, dancing nude, with his "best-selling-novel" dangling where you can expect it but don't want it to be. Symbolic?

But **Such Good Friends** is a valid experience in at last explaining the Preminger *weltanschaung*. Otto Preminger is stupid. That's it. No great revelation, but it helps you to better understand his movies.

Arthur Axelman

LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

November in London. A cold wind blows round the concrete blockhouses of the Southbank where the National Film Theatre is housed. No revolutionary movements this year, no noticeable trends, no obvious masterpieces. A winter festival for the distributors.

Some pictures, like Peter Fonda's **The Hired Hand** and Jacques Tati's **Traffic** were already in the West End by festival time. Some, like Miklos Jansco's **Agnus Dei**, are on their way to the Art houses, propelled by their directors' reputations rather than by their intrinsic merit. A few, like the Taviani brothers' excellent **St. Michael Had a Rooster** seem fated to go unseen by the general public. But whatever their commercial fate, all the movies seemed curiously separate: private works with nothing to say to each other. Best therefore for me to simply append notes on the good and the needy, whilst tacitly ignoring the clunkers (of which there were quite a lot, thank you).

St. Michael Had a Rooster is a political/historical movie handsomely made in colour on an Italian T.V. budget by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani. In three acts it tells the story of a nineteenth century revolutionary who is captured in a futile raid, spends ten years in solitary confinement and is finally destroyed when he meets a group of new scientific revolutionaries who despise his ineffectualness. Quietly, he slips over the side of the prison boat to his death.

The film is based on a short story by Tolstoy, and perhaps this is where its feeling for the even, inhuman passage of time comes from: the operatic life style comes up against the unhurried progress of minutes, hours, years. A long lateral track away from the captured revolutionaries reveals an empty, dusty street where the soldiers are expected. But no-one comes. Yet.

Robert Bresson's **Four Nights of a Dreamer** (from the same Dostoievski story which Visconti turned into **White Nights**) takes an opposite path. While the hero and the heroine stay within the timeless, abstract world that Bresson creates from bare walls, bleak furniture and minimal gestures, one believes in them and their fable entirely. Unfortunately, this makes the rupture in tone even more shattering when the untidy "real" world breaks in: high-rise buildings and hippies, no less. There are also nearly as many doors and stairs as in **Une Femme Douce**; they seem to have a private significance for Bresson that escapes me.

Still in the country of private visions, Walerian Borowczyk's **Blanche**, recreates a corner of the thirteenth century in extraordinarily convincing detail. Michel Simon plays a bloody-minded feudal overlord who brings death to himself, his innocent wife, his son and the king's page — mainly through his own stubborness and pride. In the medieval setting, depicted with obsessive and eerie precision, ex-animator Borowczyk has found, or made, a setting for his enigmatic rituals of love and violence as marvellous as **Goto - Island of Love.**

The Ceremony, by Nagisa Oshima, is a family saga, shot through with what we have come to think of as the traditional Japanese obsessions — suicide, and fascination with rejection of the traditional past. One family, living in a house whose rooms seem to exist in time as much as in space, provide Oshima

Arthur Axelman is 27, a journalist, playwright, director, actor, teacher and former rock music publicist, based in New York City.

?

Can a Canadian feature film from an original Latvian fin de siècle novello adapted by a Peruvian wireless operator with additional dialogue by a genuine Dixiecrat, featuring a Liverpuddlian sextet exterpolating on Stanislavian pyrotechnics, directed by a Carpathian boot-maker with Chekovian withdrawal symptoms and strong Bergmanian delusions find happiness in a film lab run by a crazy Irishman?

Quite likely.

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with a metaphor of the state of modern Japan. Or so it seemed. The problem, as usual is one of language and conventions. What seemed to me by turns powerful and banal may well be utterly different to a Japanese audience.

Happiness in Twenty Years, a compilation film by Albert Knobler, is well worth seeing. It contains a great deal of soberly presented and, as far as I can make out, undoctored Czech newsreel footage shot by and for the state. The climax comes with the Slansky trial, where an anonymous cameraman records the last speech and confession of a calm, almost casual Slansky only a few hours away from his death at the hands of the state hangman.

And the rest? Well there are the Demy and the Olmi films, which should be out and about very soon, and which can do very nicely without my praise. And then there was. . .(yes, **Dot Dot Dot**) by the Argentinian Edgardo Cozarinsky, an obscure but sometimes very funny political parable.

And there was **Bleak Moments**. Producer Les Blair and Director Mike Leigh made this 35mm colour movie for about £20,000. All credit to them for this feat, though they are not the first young filmmakers to achieve the financially impossible. What impresses, however, is that one can watch **Bleak Moments** without ever having to make allowances for technical inexperience or amateur acting. The acting is, in fact, very, very good, and the directing is subtle and unobtrusive. That the overall experience of the film is depressing is the "fault" of the subject: some bleak moments indeed in the life of a young girl in a dead end job, saddled with a mentally retarded sister. It is a film of sequences which do not cohere in the usual way, and if he makes a second movie, Mike Leigh will have to face this problem if he is at all interested in normal film distribution. Still, whatever happens next, he has made — and had shown in London — one excellent film, which is what festivals are supposed to be for.

Howard Thompson

A SOUFFLÉ OF A MOVIE!

"Louis Malle's new 'Le Souffle Au Coeur' (Murmur of the Heart) is a slick, almost incredibly charming family comedy about a family that isn't very charming. The film is so amiable about such things as incest, infidelity, masturbation and social irresponsibility, among other things, that it comes close to restoring the naughty image that most Americans once cherished of the French...a comedy of uncommonly high order."
—VINCENT CANBY, NEW YORK TIMES

"No blinking the matter, a comedy about incest—and successfully consummated incest at that. You find joy in the least expected places these days at the movies."
—RICHARD SCHICKEL, LIFE MAGAZINE

"Malle is touching on a sensitive area, the oedipal theme, but with a tenderness and understanding and compassion that is overwhelming. He is concerned with the total expression of caring between human beings. The performances are remarkable, with Lea Massari, Benoit Ferreux and Daniel Gelin sheer perfection." —JUDITH CRIST, NEW YORK MAGAZINE

"An amazing movie. Amazing in the way of acting, direction, script. All of this 'Murmur of the Heart' has."
—ANN BIRSTEIN, VOGUE MAGAZINE

"A sophisticated, sly story of upper class incest. A subtlety and sophistication makes this movie fun as well as morally dizzying, a fine film."
—PAUL ZIMMERMAN, NEWSWEEK

"Exhilarating. A joyous work. 'Murmur of the Heart' is mellow and smooth, yet it has the kick of a mule—a funny kick, which sends you out doubled over grinning. I can't remember another movie in which family life and adolescence have been used for such high comedy. Malle finds a new ripe vein of comedy."
—PAULINE KAEL, THE NEW YORKER

"A fast paced, amusing and worldly-wise movie. While we laugh with recognition, we also wince with pain at remembered hurts and frustrations. It is a picture that provides genuine pleasure in a day and age when the only genuine things seem to be pain." —DAVID GOLDMAN, WCBS RADIO

"Malle still ranks as one of the cordon bleu chefs of French filmmaking. Only a Frenchman would dream of making a breezy, blase film about incest; and I suspect that only Louis Malle could get away with it."
—KATHLEEN CARROLL, N.Y. DAILY NEWS

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT A FILM ABOUT INCEST COULD BE SO WARM, SO FRESH AND SO FUNNY?

LOUIS MALLE'S
murmur of the heart
(LE SOUFFLE AU COEUR)
STARRING LEA MASSARI

BENOIT FERREUX · IN LOUIS MALLE'S "MURMUR OF THE HEART" (LE SOUFFLE AU COEUR) WITH DANIEL GELIN · MICHEL LONSDALE · GILA VON WEITERSHAUSEN · AVE NINCHI · MUSIC SCORE CHARLIE PARKER · EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS VINCENT MALLE · CLAUDE NEDJAR · WRITTEN, DIRECTED AND PRODUCED BY LOUIS MALLE · IN COLOR

SOON IN SELECTED THEATRES COAST-TO-COAST!

FILMEX

The First Los Angeles Film Exposition (FILMEX) was an event that must mark the beginning of a new phase in the history of Hollywood. As a film festival, measured in the quality of the films shown and in audience reception, FILMEX was an unqualified success, fully the rival of the long-established festivals in New York and San Francisco.

But its significance as an event here in the cultural wastelands of Los Angeles goes far deeper. FILMEX is not just another festival. It is the birth of a new force in Hollywood; and, in apparent recognition of this fact, it was all but officially boycotted by "official" Hollywood.

What the Academy Awards are for the old Hollywood, FILMEX has become for a new Hollywood. This new Hollywood is peopled by that generation of film lovers who were weaned on the neurosis of 1950's Hollywood movies, educated themselves with a steady diet of late, late shows in the 1960's, forced the creation of film schools, film societies, and film magazines throughout the country in the late 1960's, and have now emigrated to Los Angeles ready to become filmmakers themselves. It was for this group that FILMEX came into existence. And FILMEX can take credit for pulling this group into a collective awareness of its strength, for FILMEX is a manifesto — a declaration of independence from the old Hollywood.

An audience has been found and has defined itself. It is an audience of young filmmakers and film freaks, whose numbers filled the 1500 seats of Grauman's Chinese Theater to hear a 21-piece orchestra recreate the original viewing conditions for DeMille's delightfully insane 1923 version of **The Ten Commandments**, to give an affectionate standing ovation to an aging Fay Wray, to view a midnight screening of Michael Curtiz's 1933 **Mystery of the Wax Museum** in early two-strip Technicolor, to overflow the aisles for a 10-hour marathon of Alfred Hitchcock's films, and to enthusiastically embrace an homage to the American "Film Noir" of the 40's and 50's prepared with groundbreaking program notes by historian Paul Schrader. This was an audience that knew its film history well enough to break into spontaneous applause when Franklin Pangborn popped up in a bit part in Griffith's 1929 **Lady of the Pavements**. But it was also an audience that knew enough about film direction to similarly applaud the abstract beauties of a scene well directed. It was a knowledgeable audience that loved cinema more than it loved camp.

About fifty percent of the festival was a tribute to the American cinema. Beautiful 35mm prints of Griffith's **Lady of the Pavements**, von Sternberg's **Docks of New York**, Harold Lloyd's **The Kid Brother**, and Lubitsch's **The Student Prince** — all projected on Grauman's Chinese's huge screen with accompaniment ranging from organ to full orchestra — brought the silent cinema back to life in its full glory. It was a true revelation for anyone accustomed to viewing old movies in bad 16mm reductions, in silence, and often projected at the wrong speed. Similarly, such films as Sam Fuller's **Pickup On South**

FOR ALL
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Best Costume Design Best Sound
Best Original Dramatic Score
Best Art Direction & Set Direction
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Street, Aldrich's **Kiss Me Deadly**, Joseph H. Lewis's **Gun Crazy**, Kazan's **Baby Doll**, Ford's **The Long Voyage Home**, Nicholas Ray's **They Live By Night**, Raoul Walsh's **White Heat**, Chaplin's **Modern Times**, Hitchcock's **Rope**, and Preston Sturges **Unfaithfully Yours** were rescued from the indignities of television programming.

Opening night premiered Peter Bogdanovich's **The Last Picture Show**. It is a film that pays homage to the richness of the Hollywood filmmaking tradition, and finally vouchsafes for Hollywood a young director of talents sufficient to be worthy of that tradition. Bogdanovich, of course, was one of the first of the film freaks to graduate from interviewing and idolizing to making his own movies. Today he has lived out his ultimate fantasy as a film freak by directing Barbra and Ryan in a studio comedy à la Howard Hawks. What with the studios dying fast, he may also be the last to live out those fantasies.

Sex

Andy Warhol's return to directing was a major festival event. Under the epic title of **Sex**, Warhol's camera collects images of an abstract beauty that has eluded Paul Morrissey in his two recent stands as substitute director. Warhol's style is the essence of freedom, while Morrissey's more traditionally formal compositions reflect the prison of a freedom imitated without being understood. The subject matter of **Sex**, of course, is outrageous and perfectly suited to Warhol's sense of humor: three transvestites agitating for women's liberation under the banner of PIGs (Politically Involved Girls). The new superstar is Candy Darling, heavily reminiscent of Viva with wonderful lapses into mock-theatrical monologues garnered from old Kim Novak lines. In Candy Darling, Warhol has objectified the ultimate masculine-feminine ambiguity, her masklike face synthesizing all the mystery of Garbo, Dietrich, Hepburn — our whole filmic heritage of idealized and thus unattainable beauty. Warhol also continues his single-handed rediscovery of the evolution of film style by reintroducing the matched cut to a modern cinema which has had to abandon (through loss of craft) the art of continuity.

Pasolini's **The Decameron** is appropriately vulgar, certainly less cerebral than recent Pasolini, and a real crowd pleaser. It is mostly concerned with anti-clerical moralities and fucking. And while it is ostensibly a series of heterosexual encounters it is, more honestly, Pasolini's answer to Warhol's **13 Most Beautiful Boys**. It is humorous, decadent, features a large close-up of an erection, and, after some editing, will be pandered in the United States by United Artists. The best sequences simply observe Pasolini, as the painter Giotto, executing a large commissioned mural with the help of several handsome assistants — an act which Pasolini obviously parallels to his own methods of creating.

Robert Bresson's **Quatre Nuits d'un Rêveur** was the masterpiece of the festival. At 64, Bresson is at his least austere and his most sensual; and **Four Nights of a Dreamer** should be his most accessible film since **Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne**. His images, as always, are sublimely beautiful. It is a deceptively simple film in the way that all great art is deceptively simple. While the story, from Dostoievski, is timeless, the contemporary setting is surely Bresson's acknowledgement of a new and higher awareness in modern life. It is the kind of film that changes lives.

Of the new directors on their first giddy visits to Hollywood, most impressive was West Germany's Werner Herzog with his strange non-narrative feature **Fata Morgana**. The camera pans across the Sahara desert, uncovering surreal potential for abstract illusions while the soundtrack talks of mythologies of creation and destruction. Herzog combines an incredibly handsome pictorial sense with a delightful playfulness. He takes the viewer on an unsettling journey over barren wastelands, serving simultaneously to reflect the apocalypse of modern man and a continuing metaphysical potential. More than **2001, Fata Morgana** is the ultimate movie-trip.

Another expanding surprise was Vilgot Sjoman's **Blushing Charlie (Lyckliga Skitar)**. Like Warhol, Sjoman lets his camera invite controversy, here lingering on genitals with not-so-innocent amusement — the goal being audience liberation. Of course, the wide mis-reception of **I Am Curious — Yellow** has probably led more people to dismiss than embrace Sjoman as a serious artist. But, with Bergman's recent estrangement from cosmic awareness, Sjoman is the most vital of the Scandinavian directors. His films are revolutionary both in form and content, but also warmly humanistic. Sjoman is committed to many of the same ideals as Godard, but is much more friendly toward his audience.

Jacques Demy was affectionately greeted with an afternoon retrospective of his films, carefully selected (by Demy and Alan Howard) to chronicle the continuing stories

Four Nights of a Dreamer

of the characters who either reappear or are referred to in Demy's films from **Lola** through **The Model Shop.**

Demy's **Peau d'Ane** was somewhat less affectionately received. **Peau d'Ane** is a sinisterly humorous rendition of a popular French fairy tale, with dark moral implications lurking behind its marshmallow facade. That Demy may be caught in an uncomfortable transition is revealed in the neurotic extremes of his color scheme, and the disconcerting undertones of Michel Legrand's none-too-original score. These are very conscious choices on the part of the director, but the results border more on the unpleasantness of Agnes Varda's **Le Bonheur** than the healthy release of Demy's **Les Demoiselles de Rochefort**.

At last, FILMEX also premiered Claude Chabrol's **Le Boucher** in Los Angeles. One wonders why U.S. distributors have been so slow to recognize the commercial potential of this masterpiece. Hopefully it will not fall to the same obscurity as Jean Renoir's **The River** (1951) which the festival revived to blow a lot of minds. It is one of Renoir's greatest films.

Less interesting were Ermanno Olmi's typically dull **Durante l'Estate**, Louis Malle's grossly overrated, but amusing, **Le Souffle au Coeur**, Dusan Makavejev's uneven and relatively artless **WR: Mysteries of the Organism**, Jorn Donner's tedious journey into despair, **Anna**, and the shuck **Films of John and Yoko.**

Political and social interests were served by Haskell Wexler's and Saul Landau's straightforward documentary **Brazil: A Report on Torture**, Michael Gray's **The Murder of Fred Hampton**, and David Schickele's very handsomely and affectionately directed **Bushman**.

The vitality of the women's movement was reflected in such festival choices as **The Woman's Film** from the San Francisco Newsreel Cooperative and, curiously, **Memoria de Helena**, a first feature by Brazilian critic David Neves. A panel of women active in the film industry (including directors Agnes Varda and Juleen Compton, and writer Diana Gould) reported with some optimism on the increasing involvement of women in independent production. The exclusion of women, and the discrimination against women in the official Hollywood industry, is accepted as another given — and another reason why the death of the studio system is welcomed.

Credit for the festival goes first of all to George Cukor, who lent the festival his high-level influence with prospective funders. The actual programming and carrying out of FILMEX was handled with high style by Gary Essert, Gary Abrahams, and Beverly Walker, all of whom deserve the deepest of gratitude from the filmgoing and filmmaking community for raising a lot of consciousnesses.

This is the first time I have gone to a film festival that was not dominated by fat, wealthy ladies in mink coats. And this is the first large-scale film event that I have seen in Los Angeles that didn't kiss the posteriors of tuxedoed producers in Gucci shoes. This was a festival of, by, and for the people who love movies.

John H. Dorr

John Dorr is a writer/filmmaker presently biding his time in Los Angeles looking for financing for two film projects

Will keep you hanging from the edge of your seat!

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PG

OVER LOOKED & UNDER RATED

Companeras and Companeros is a 90-minute film about Cuba in 1969. The title refers to the advisors — soldiers, students, housewives — who temporarily give up their everyday lives to help harvest 25 million tons of sugar, build a new road or house in a backward area, work in a factory, or direct the political development of the young. What emerges most strongly is the Cubans' devotion to the ideals of their revolution, and beyond that the obvious fact that they are learning to live and work together, and mostly enjoying it. The film was made by Adolfas Mekas, Barbara Stone and David C. Stone, with the assistance of Cuban cameramen and, presumably, interviewers.

Lovemaking. Dir. Stan Brakhage. Every Brakhage film is overlooked and underrated. **Lovemaking** (1968) is that same dynamic eye, the most truly innocent eye in all filmmaking, concerning itself with the gestures and expressions of lovemaking. By innocent I mean that, by now, Brakhage's technique is so responsive to his perception that there is no need, no room for calculation — he shoots as he feels. His films are not documentaries, then, but records — aesthetically (re)-ordered records certainly — of interactions. So **Lovemaking** is not a film about adults, dogs and children making love, but a film of Stan Brakhage being a filmmaker (a man, with a camera) in the presence of adults, dogs and children making love. These images are beautiful, then, not because of what they show, but because of what they are, because every pattern, movement, refocus is the result of an exchange. Of course the *quality* of the exchange is crucial — if Brakhage did not give himself, in the moment of shooting, to his subjects (how often do we really mean objects?) could they give as much of themselves as they do to him?

This is the one beautiful, *liberating* fuck film I have seen.

The Further Adventures of Uncle Sam is a 13-minute, all stops pulled, caricaturist's tribute to the enduring spirit of America, brought to you by that friendly guy who concocted most of the storyboard of **Yellow Submarine**. Not Erich Segal. His name is Robert Mitchell, and he's co-founder of the Haboush Company, a small Hollywood outfit whose bread and butter consists of shaggy one-minute commercials for unlikely products such as Fiddle-Faddle and Sir Laff-A-Lot. **Uncle Sam** lost out in the Academy sweepstakes, which means it won't make its money back for a long, long time. However, if the idea of the American eagle, in track shoes, climbing a butte and yodelling a

cajun tune (as the cactus swing and sway) while his old stovepipe-hatted buddy Uncle Sam, now a pump jockey in the Mojave, gets beaned by the falling hood of the meanies' 16-cylinder monster and is seeing stars (meanwhile, the whole thing is being filmed by a shadowy crew of larger-than-life news cameramen hovering atop the highest mesa) strikes you as a) funny, b) a loving homage to the grand tradition of the Hollywood cartoon, and c) an excellent way of dealing with what's good about American ideals and bad about American realities today — Bob Mitchell and Dale Case would be delighted. They would be even more delighted if you could *see* their movie.

Hugo and Josephin (Dir. Kjell Grede) is a magical film about two Swedish children and what they do with their summer. The film turns the whole world into players in the kids' playworld. Yet the play people are real too, and eventually the kids' innocent vision has to come to grips with some hard realities. In one of the most beautiful endings in narrative cinema, the kids sit down to dinner with their favorite grown-up in the middle of a country road, giggle themselves silly on potatoes, then listen with appropriate sobriety while he gently, mysteriously tells them that he must go away. Which he does, driving off into the dusk in his ancient pickup as they watch from the sofa he's left them sitting on. Bought in 1967, when Warners was buying — **Performance** sat around for years too — **Hugo and Josephin** has become the victim of a sclerotic business which finds it more profitable to shelve a small film whose market potential is uncertain, than to release it. *We must create alternate forms of distribution and exhibition.* Meanwhile, one of these months or years you may be able to see **Hugo and Josephin** — most likely on television.

Tony Reif

What elevates **Play Misty For Me** (Dir. Clint Eastwood) above other **Psycho** imitations is Evelyn, a well-written character excellently played by Jessica Walter. Evelyn is your average "swinging single" run amuck. She entices DJ Dave Garland (Eastwood) into a quick no-strings affair, then tries to strangle him with the no-strings. Evelyn's development from a casual one-night stand, to a pathetic groupie, to a strident neurotic, to a homicidal maniac is the most terrifying thing I have seen on the screen since Norman Bates — and a lot more true to life. Actor Eastwood, on the other hand, is still a bore.

Dale Thomajan

RED DETACHMENT OF WOMEN

It won't be a box office hit!
(Do 800,000,000 Red Book waving Chinese care?)
The camera sits in the orchestra pit and films a stage performance.

. . .

A press release:

This dance drama protrays the revolutionary development of Wu Ching-hua, the daughter of a poor peasant. It takes place on Hainan Island during the Second Revolutionary Civil War (1927-1937), where Ching-hua served as a slave in the manor of the despotic landlord Nan Pa-tien. After one escape attempt she is so severely beaten that she falls unconscious and Nan Pa-tien leaves her for dead. The disguised Hung Chang-ching, a Red Army cadre, and his messenger Pang find Ching-hua. After hearing her story, they tell her where to find the Red Army. Ching-hua is welcomed at the revolutionary base, and her story of bloody class repression is told to educate the people.

In a scheme to destroy the tyrant Nan Pa-tien, revolutionaries Hung and Pang enter his manor disguised in order that they may strike from within, while the Red Army attacks from without. Making contact with Pang, Ching-hua sees her former master and, filled with rage, prematurely gives the signal to attack.

Ching-hua realizes her mistake and learns that only through the emancipation of all mankind, rather than personal revenge, will the proletariat achieve its own freedom.

The Red Detachment assembles to combat the Kuomintang Army. Hung, leading a contingent of Red Army men, fearlessly holds a mountain pass, covering the main forces' victorious attack at the enemy's rear. Hung denounces the cruel landlord and dies heroically. The battle won and the despotic landlord shot, the workers whose families suffered for generations are liberated. Ching-hua joins the Communist Party at the Front, and carries on as Party Representative. The revolutionary masses rise to join the Red Army and songs of battle resound to the skies: FORWARD, FORWARD, UNDER THE BANNER OF MAO TSE-TUNG, FORWARD TO VICTORY!

This film, sent to the people of the United States by the people of China, not only holds great relevance for women's liberation in this country, it is a lesson for us all: Only by uniting to fight for the freedom of all mankind will there be victory over every form of oppression.

. . .

The ballet in the movie is not simply 16th century Louis the XIII or XIV court ballet, nor Checcetti Russian. From the torso up, the dancers use gestures and movements of Chinese opera; from the torso down, the dancers are performing ballet. All arm gestures and flighty ballet fingers are replaced by the Chinese Opera arm: fingers together and thumb out, a sweeping arm gesture that curves into a presentation of a (handshake-like) fist. The women are on point and the men do the acrobatics. Pas de deux show up in the fight scenes between heroine and attackers, while the corp de ballet does a "Manual of Arms Dance" and each pretty, shiny, powder blue uniformed dancer holds a rifle. The folk dances used in the performance are sufficiently cleaned up for presentation, just as in all ballet companies around the world — even the Bolshoi.

The artistic innovation, in addition to the reasonable story, is the overlay of Ballet on Chinese Opera.

Revolutionary?

Both forms, heroic, romantic and grandiose, work well together—yet both fail as they try to encompass a meaningful narrative. Chinese opera, an ancient, highly-stylized religious form, is trite in its feudal stories and style (one can change the stories yet the style remains). Ballet too, a high court form, emphasizes "line" (Louis XIV's dance master's technique) where the external design of the body is more important than psychological motivations or social conditions.

The movie ballet falls apart at the point of conflict, both figuratively and literally. The lead lady struggles with, nay fights her oppressors, yet in her physical fight with them they hold her legs and arms and twist her into a beautiful line — Voila pas de deux! By helping her, they betray the narrative. The narrative is also superseded by Chinese Opera acrobatics and melodramatic gestures, as well as the Ballet clichés of "despair," "exaltation" and "search." The narrative even flirts with naturalism: real tears on a close up, and real rain poured over the lens (the stage is left dry). Each rupture of the narrative drives us away from the lesson of the story. The subject is epic but the styles are not.

There is no elaborate camera work, and only one overhead set up (so we can see a folk dance pattern). The camera remains stationary, closing in or opening wide. Once too often, the close-ups of facial expressions lose the body meaning and motion of the dancers.

I took the whole thing literally: a suffering woman who finds liberation. The Chinese lady sitting next to me said: "The girl's story represents the history of China." She took it figuratively, as one does with Chinese Operas (one General with three red tassels on his baton represents three regiments). And the bourgeois Chinese lady added that she enjoyed the film (made by 800 million Reds).

Ronny Davis

Ronny Davis is the founder and ex-director of the San Francisco Mime Troupe, an associate of the Bay Area School (a Marxist academy), and the author of a forthcoming book titled, "Guerilla Theater From The Beginning of the World To the Day I Left the San Francisco Mime Troupe."

KING LEAR

Directed by Grigori Kozintsev; Music by Shostakovich; Starring Yuri Jarvet (Lear), V. Shendrikova (Cordelia), G. Volchek (Regan), E. Radzinya (Goneril), Regimantas Adomaitis (Edmund) and Donatas Banionis (Albany): A Sovexportfilm release.

Grigori Kozintsev's **King Lear** was previewed at the World Shakespeare Congress in Vancouver. So vivid, energetic and moving a film was it that the lunatic fringe of media heads and the lunatic pate of traditional lit crit joined in a five-minute standing ovation for the director.

Like Kurosawa's **Throne Of Blood** and Kosintsev's own **Hamlet**, this **Lear** moves into the physical landscape for its poetry and abandons huge swaths of verse for its physicalization of the text. Again, there is a free verse translation by Boris Pasternak, and a tremendous score by Shostakovich.

The casting is magnificent. Yuri Jarvet is an unforgettable Lear, a small frightened skull with burning eyes, urgent, impulsive movements — but always fear, even at the outset, which Cordelia's silence, its challenge to his authority and power, chafes. Lear has a rippling white mane of hair that rhymes with the long, blowing grass on the earth.

Lear's daughters are a remarkable achievement. They project obviously different temperaments, yet they are obviously sisters. It's in their eyes, both the difference and the familial bond.

Throughout the film eyes are prominent, as Kozintsev takes his clue from the punishment of Gloucester, and the verbal ironies of sight and insight that play around that gruesome scene — here represented by a medium shot of the impending spur. The animals throughout the film are all shot for the stolid power of their eyes. As Edmund and Edgar circle in combat, the center of gravity lies in Edgar's eyes, steady and fearless. And there is a crushing irony at the end. Lear and Cordelia are carried off dead, their eyes felicitously closed. Goneril, Regan and Edmund are carried off with their eyes wide open.

Kosintsev's **Lear** presents the oppression of vast empty spaces and a society of unindividuated sufferers. The director explained to the Congress how he auditions settings as well as actors, how he picks his settings not for their historical, but for their poetic appropriateness. Landscape is the root and cause of a character's action as well as its image or projection. To meet "the fugitiveness of film imagery" he wanted solid settings, striking textures, long, rowdy travel sequences. Textures he undoubtedly has, from the straw cape against which the credits appear, to the succession of rocky wastes, to the palpable darkness of the skies. And the eroded faces wherever one looks.

So the film presents the suffering of the mass. It opens with shots of beggars and peasants plodding up the dry, wide range. Implicit in this opening is the ruler's duty to his subjects, for at the end the peasants' homes are razed by the fires of Lear's war. Edgar, as Poor Tom, joins a procession of beggars, so Lear joins not a single madman, in his hovel during the storm scene, but a community of impoverished isolates. Poor Tom's mad speech is "the voice of landscape, the voice of folk song," beggars and lamenting madmen. Tom is "not just the bare forked animal but the image of the country itself laid bare, nothing to eat, no shelter."

The most controversial element in the film may be the characterization of Lear's Fool. In place of the jester's coxcomb he has a shaved head, sad, not manic, eyes, and not the traditional unruly wisdom but a sad, urgent resignation. Kosintsev told the Congress about Nazi concentration camps where orchestras were conscripted from among the prisoners, and the musicians were beaten to play better. From this Kozintsev took the character of the fool, indeed the tone of his film. For according to Kozintsev, "**King Lear** is not only the Theatre of Cruelty but the Theatre of Mercy . . . . I tried to strengthen the voice of good, even where no words are spoken, in the silences, in the exchange of glances of sympathy."

There will be the usual cavils at the adapter's liberties with his text. Gloucester's famous mock-suicide is omitted, perhaps in deference to Peter Brook's brilliant recommendation of a split-screen for the scene (*Tulane Drama Review*, Fall, 1966), which would not have fitted into Kozintsev's classical camera style. But the film works as a powerful evocation of the mood and emotion of Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

For Kozintsev understands the duties of the adapter, as well as his rights.

Maurice Yacowar

Maurice Yacowar teaches film at Brock University in St. Catherines, Ontario. He's hairy, 28, a Calgarian, and has a PhD in English Literature.

Third World Festival

THE HOUR OF THE FURNACES

". . . the movie equivalent of a revolutionary manifesto . . . perhaps the most spectacular example of agitprop moviemaking . . . a teaching course . . . an emotional assault . . . A movie like this is a gun in the struggle, and a far more effective gun than Godard's revolutionary movies, because though it may aim at both the heart and the mind, it strikes the heart."

Pauline Kael, The New Yorker

BLOOD OF THE CONDOR

"Depicts the impoverished life and humiliations of the Bolivian Indians both in the village and in the city but also brings us shocking news. It seems that there is a plot between the racist government and the Peace Corps . . . to sterilize and abort the indian women . . . This is a film that must be shown here . . . not only timely but also touching and beautiful in its simplicity."

Adrienne Mancia, Museum of Modern Art

EL CHACAL

". . . a powerfully-filmed first feature (which) immediately catapults Littin into the first rank of Latin American film-makers . . . what gives the film its remarkable force is its tone: a combination of grimness and compassion."

Ernest Callenbach, Film Quarterly

MEXICO, THE FROZEN REVOLUTION

"Utilizing extremely rare documentary footage of the period, the first part of the film recounts the story of the uprisings of 1910-1914. Francisco Madero, Emiliano Zapata, Pancho Villa are all here — not in some romantic incarnation, but in the specificity of their lives, their ideologies and the social forces they represented. The Frozen Revolution is not, however, merely another history lesson — useful though it may be. It is, first of all, a political documentary of Mexico today."

Irwin Silver, National Guardian

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BRAZIL-NO TIME FOR TEARS

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SAN FRANCISCO LETTER

Most filmmakers' careers begin with picking up a movie camera. Not so for Oakland's Barry Spinello. His began with pen and ink, because "the scale of my paintings kept getting smaller and smaller, down to two inches by three inches, and I began doing them in sequences."

The final descent was to celluloid strips. Using clear 16 millimeter leader, he settled down in 1967 to the Sisyphean task of inking in thousands of frames and bits of sound tracks, creating some of the most adventurous, abstract experimental works ever produced in the Bay Area.

He is the creator and master of a discipline which stresses synthesis, a form in which sight and sound are interdependent, and his ability to evoke rich emotional responses through the mere arrangement of lines and dots is nothing short of amazing.

He approaches the tools of film as if they were musical instruments, and composes works which can be seen as well as heard. He hears within himself tones, pitches, cadences and rhythms — and sees a visual accompaniment — quite unlike any extant score, and with inks and acetate screens and tapes he turns those intuitions into sound and vision.

Spinello comes to his work as a capable painter, with degrees in English and music, and two years graduate work in architecture at Columbia University. His primary form of musical expression, however, has been "improvising on a wooden recorder, which I've done all my life."

His first work, **Opus I**, was purely an exploration of materials, finding out what inks worked best, what pens were easiest to use and the like. "I was driven," he said in an interview in his basement workroom. "After **Opus I** I wanted to make films so badly, I spent 50 to 60 hours a week for seven months on my first major movie."

That major movie was the 11-minute **Sonata For Pen, Brush and Ruler**, a work based on a large set of symbols which produce different sounds when run through a projector. During the most frenetic moments, sight and sound relationships change 24 times per second. Total production costs amounted to nine dollars: three dollars for leader, the rest for ink.

Sonata, made in 1968, was followed in 1969 by the 10-minute **Soundtrack**, which supplemented pen and ink with acetate screens and tapes. With this film, his sense of film-music realized its strongest development. Inserting a jazz dynamic in his work, he then created **Variations on a 7-Second Loop Painting** and **Six Loop Paintings**, exploring the possibilities of modifications on a basic theme.

With **Daylight**, his most recent work, he has extended his experiments and discoveries into the external world of live images. He has also evolved a comprehensive intellectual construct about his work, tempering it with: "This may all be words. It doesn't matter what your theory is, your art is there anyway."

But then, in a slow, thoughtful manner, he revealed this framework:

"All my life I've been interested in all art forms. I realized it could all come together in one form. I've used an approach on studying audio-visual space-time, on a frame-by-frame basis, for both sound and image.

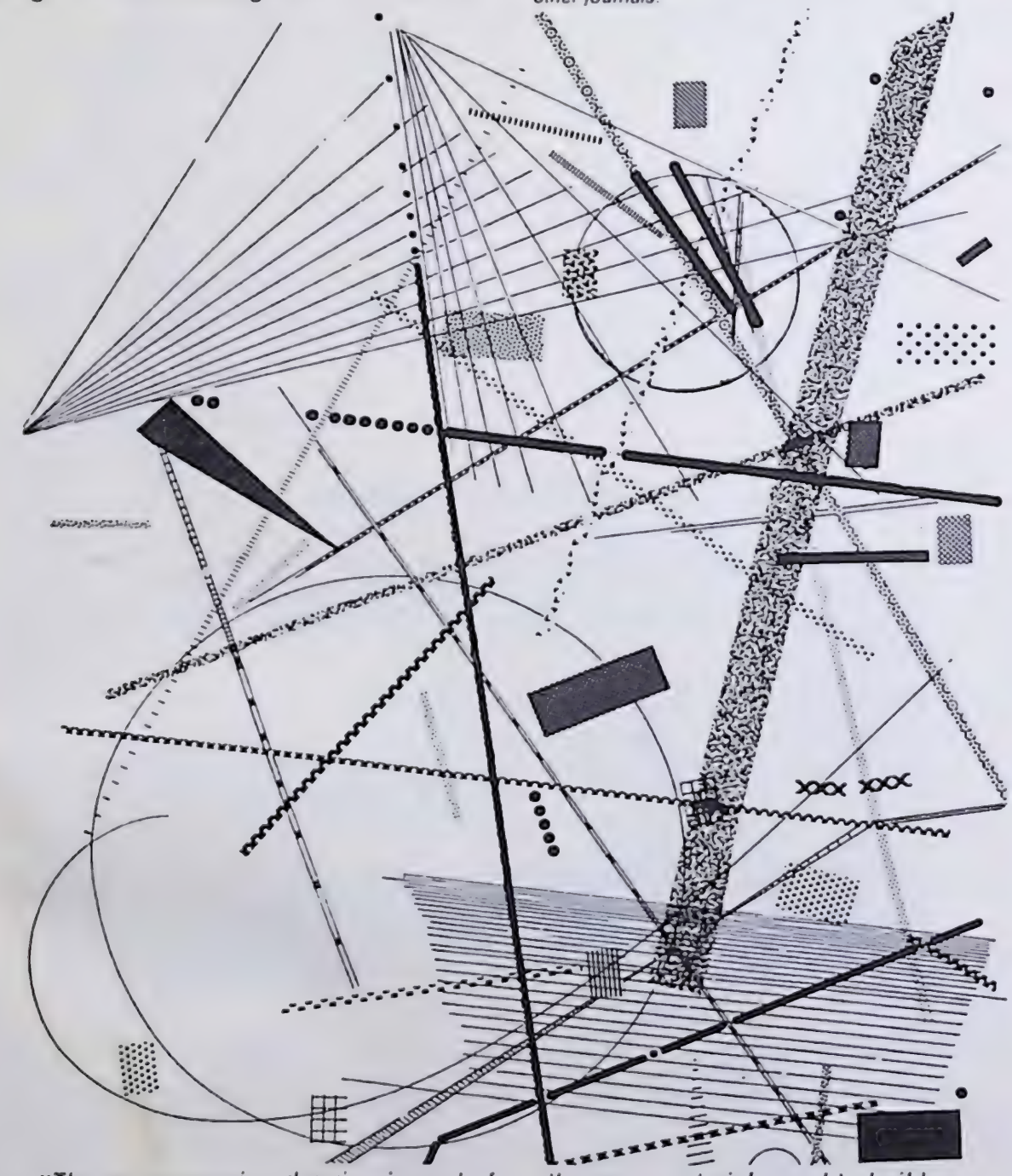
"Early in the century we learned that space and time were part of one continuum, and that's where the bottom fell out of the classical arts. Possibly, the search of this century has been to unify space and time in our consciousnesses, which means in our art forms. I've tried to work in terms that aren't visual and aren't audible, but are audio-visual. I've thought of sound in terms of space. It's hard — you sort of have two competing parts of yourself trying to come together.

"The new man may be required to not be fragmentary. In a sense, each one of the arts has gone its own way, and fragmented, until it no longer exists in the classical sense. Look at Jackson Pollack. The culture has gone through abstract sound and abstract vision, and there's a place for unity now that wasn't there before."

Spinello seeks to explore that place, and he could be pioneering a significant new approach to cinema. Previously in films, sound has been an adjunct to sight. Spinello has equalized the emphasis, and may be expanding the dimensions of both music and film.

Hal Aigner

Hal Aigner edits the film reviews and feature articles section of a San Francisco Bay area entertainment bi-weekly called The Night Times. *He has been a regular contributor to TAKE ONE for two years and has had work sporadically appear in* Rolling Stone, Rags, The Mother Earth News, *and other journals.*



"The accompanying drawing is made from the same materials used to build the film **Six Loop Drawings.** *The different patterns and spacings refer to the patterns and spacings used to produce the sounds and rhythms of the film: a special ordering of electronic potential."*
– Barry Spinello

VIDEO: AN ALTERNATIVE BY MIKE GOLDBERG

Process, rather than product. Involvement, but not imagery. Immediacy, not permanence. Erasability, but instability.

There are many reasons why video is not a substitute for film. Indeed, filmmakers often shy away from this new medium. The small portable VTR's (Video Tape Recorders) look like 8mm cameras; but this only confuses the

distinctions between the two. In fact, that design feature is a hindrance to interpersonal recording, preventing eye-to-eye contact between cameraman and subject.

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(TV ad from the 1950's)

In future columns I shall differentiate more clearly between the two media, technically, and with regards to applications and handling techniques. For now, a brief introduction to video is in order.

Image and sound are recorded electronically on magnetic tape, which is erasable. Because of rough treatment of the tape's oxide surface by the recording heads, and because of the high degree of precision in video recording, tape is fairly expensive: $15 — $25 per half hour of 1/2" tape (used computer tape works at a fraction of that cost, but it is not good for the heads). Normal wear, and improper handling and storage, cause small particles of the oxide to fall off the tape surface, increasing the number of small white spots (dropouts, or "glishes") flying across the television screen.

The eyepiece of a video camera is a small television screen. Video units can be hooked up to the antenna screws of any TV set (or series of them, as in a cable system), for monitoring during recording, or playback immediately after.

Small format VTR is not as stable, nor does it contain as much information, as broadcast television.

It is possible, shooting off a monitor (ideally with an image buffer, which has a camera perfectly aligned with a green, phosphor monitor made for this purpose), to re-record the lower standard tapes. In this process it gains stability, but loses clarity. It is somewhat like watching an 8mm film on TV.

Telecine chains for video recording of film are standard equipment in broadcast stations. Indeed, most remote recording for television is done on film. A film record of video, called a kine, is an excellent way of making a permanent copy of the tapes. As many special effects are easier to obtain with VTR, some filmmakers use video as a first step in their films.

Video formats are still changing and multiplying. Broadcast machines have settled into American and European standards (525 lines, 60 cycles; and 625 lines, 50 cycles, respectively), use four recording heads (hence the term "quadruplex", or "quad.") and 2" wide tape. Since the introduction of TVsatellites, a method of transfer from one standard to the other has been developed.

Small-format VTR's use spinning heads, which trace parallel, oblique lines on the tape. Because the tape wraps around the recording drum at an angle, it is called helical scan.

The most common smaller tape widths are 1/2" and 1". One company, Akai, puts out a 1/4" portapack. Cassettes will be mostly 3/4", with two soundtracks, for stereo or bilingual tapes. Unfortunately, the recording unit for cassettes is separate from the playback unit, and will not enter production for a while.

The 1/2" VTR's are lightweight, and are literally driven by rubber bands. Although colour units are available, there is no inexpensive colour camera at hand (word is out that Sony is developing a single-tube colour camera to cost under $1000). However, recording colour programs off the air is easy, and several video groups have colorisers. These machines assign colours for various grey-scale (voltage) values, rendering beautiful, though un-lifelike, controllable colours.

When 1/2" VTR first came out (CV series), tapes recorded on one brand's machine could not be played back on another's. Last year, several Japanese companies established compatibility standards (EIAJ, or AV series), which are becoming widely accepted. Ampex's Instavision (portable cassette recorder) will be compatible with AV machines.

1" machines are generally more stable than their 1/2" relatives. Because 1" and 1/2" machines can be electronically patched together, it is becoming increasingly popular to shoot 1/2" and edit on 1".

American and European tapes cannot, as yet, be exchanged. To transfer from one standard to the other, you must have a setup of both types, and shoot off the monitor.

At Intermedia, we are collating an international video listing, the first issue of which is now printed and available to people working with small-format VTR. If your are into video, please fill out the form below and mail it to: Video Exchange Directory, c/o Image Bank, 4454 West 2nd Ave., Vancouver 8, B.C., Canada. You will receive the current issue of the listing, and be included in the next one.

Radical Software is must reading for anyone using VTR seriously. It includes many useful modifications of the equipment, information on software, media philosophy, video groups, etc. Back issues are available from Raindance Corporation, 8 East 12 Street, New York, N.Y. 10003, U.S.A.

Michael Shamberg's *Guerrilla Television*, published by Holt, Rinehart, is now available in both soft and hard covers.

Gene Youngblood's *Expanded Cinema* has a good section on video, and is well worth its $5.95 price. It is published by E. P. Dutton and Co. Inc., New York, and by Clarke, Irwin & Co. Ltd. in Canada. *The Videosphere* should be out soon.

Of interest are the N.F.B.'s "Challenge for Change" brochures. They are into video as a tool for social animation. Write to: Challenge for Change Newsletters, National Film Board, P.O. Box 6100, Montréal, P.Q., Canada.

And if you haven't read Marshall McLuhan's books (*The Medium Is the Massage*, *Understanding Media*, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, etc.), do.

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Hal Aigner - Jon Carroll - Michael Goodwin

Shaft: Gordon Parks, the famous *Life* photographer, directed this movie, and Gordon Parks is black. Then why is this such a white movie? Them darkies sure are tough mothers. Fists, do your stuff. Yassuh.

Bedknobs and Broomsticks: Adolescent psychedelia from the studio that gave you **Snow White**. Watch Angela Lansbury get an acid flash on a flying bed. On the other hand, David Burns was a perfectly marvelous actor, and he's a joy to watch anytime, even here. In the end, the cute kids and the cute witch defeat the Nazis. Everyone in the theater was very happy.

To Find A Man: This Columbia release serves to set a new standard for tastelessness by using abortion as the subject for a situation comedy. It's as funny as a rusty coathanger in the girls' john.

J. W. Coop: This film asks the question: Can the man who played President Kennedy in **PT-109** make it as the producer, director, and lead actor of a movie about a rodeo rider, fresh out of prison, trying to make a comeback? No, he can't, and in the process of failing on all levels he even neglects to

capture any interesting or lyrical rodeo footage.

200 Motels: Technically fascinating. Rock and roll hard-liner Frank Zappa shot this film in three weeks on videotape, and then transferred it to film. The visuals won't surprise anyone who's ever fiddled with the dials of a color television set, and the basic idea, if it can be called that, of the film won't astonish anyone over ten. But where else can you see Keith Moon as a groupie nun?

The Last Picture Show: This isn't the greatest movie ever made, but it's quite good. Considering how fragile the plot really is, the pacing and camerawork are stunning. Timothy Bottoms plays his litmus paper role quite well, and the supporting work is equally sensitive and skillful. If only the whole enterprise weren't quite so self-conscious . . .

Straw Dogs: Technically, the last third of it isn't bad, but Peckinpah has let the violence get out of hand and his film ends up being truly, and deeply distasteful. There may be a thematic justification for the blood and the pain, but who cares? Dustin Hoffman is just as lousy as you expected him to be.

Play Misty For Me: Clint Eastwood's debut as a director is not without interest. In the best scenes, he maintains a fine B-movie sense of claustrophobia, abetted by a strong, villainous performance by Jessica Walter. It's occasionally scary, and never pretentious. A blessing in disguise.

Made For Each Other: A feeble attempt to palm off hysterics and shouting as dramatic intensity. Wonderfully received by New York's liberal chic, it may have a place in the Naked City's ethnic settings, but anywhere else . . .

The Skin Game: This is really a subtle moral fable disguised as another James Garner con-man-in-the-Old-West vehicle. Lou Gossett and Susan Clark both turn in remarkable performances, aided by an intelligent script and brisk direction. Raise your consciousness and have fun at the same time.

Happy Birthday, Wanda June: Strenuously attempting to extract meaning from the obvious, this effort to adapt the grim, cynical humor of Kurt Vonnegut to the screen is too deliberate and self-conscious to be much more than a hollow pretense.

The French Connection: Morally muddled, as has been so often pointed out, but nevertheless well-paced, competent, and marvelously edited. Gene Hackman has a high old time in his best role since **Bonnie and Clyde**. You'll like it in spite of yourself.

"$": A bank robbery suspense adventure which might work if it weren't clear, from the start, that the caper won't come off. A little tension evolves from the possibility that Warren Beatty will take a healthy, unknowing swig from a bottle of LSD.

Diamonds Are Forever: A great comic strip disguised as a movie. Don't expect the tight plotting and good humor of the best Bond movies; this one is just a bunch of far-out ideas strung together with not even a glimmer of continuity. It ties with **French Connection** for having the best car-chase of the year; both of them cut **Bullitt**.

Cisco Pike: Well, sure. A fallen rock star, surprisingly well-played by Kris Kristofferson, is forced into selling grass by a demented narc. Cameo appearances by Viva, Wavy Gravy and others will perk up your flagging interest. A good rainy night flick.

The Organization: An ecumenical band of young folks (one black, one Chicano, one Oriental, one beard) gets pissed off at the pushers and decides to take on the Mafia. Sidney Poitier is the straight-arrow cop who helps. The opening sequence is tight and competent, a caper in the best Hollywood tradition. After that, zero.

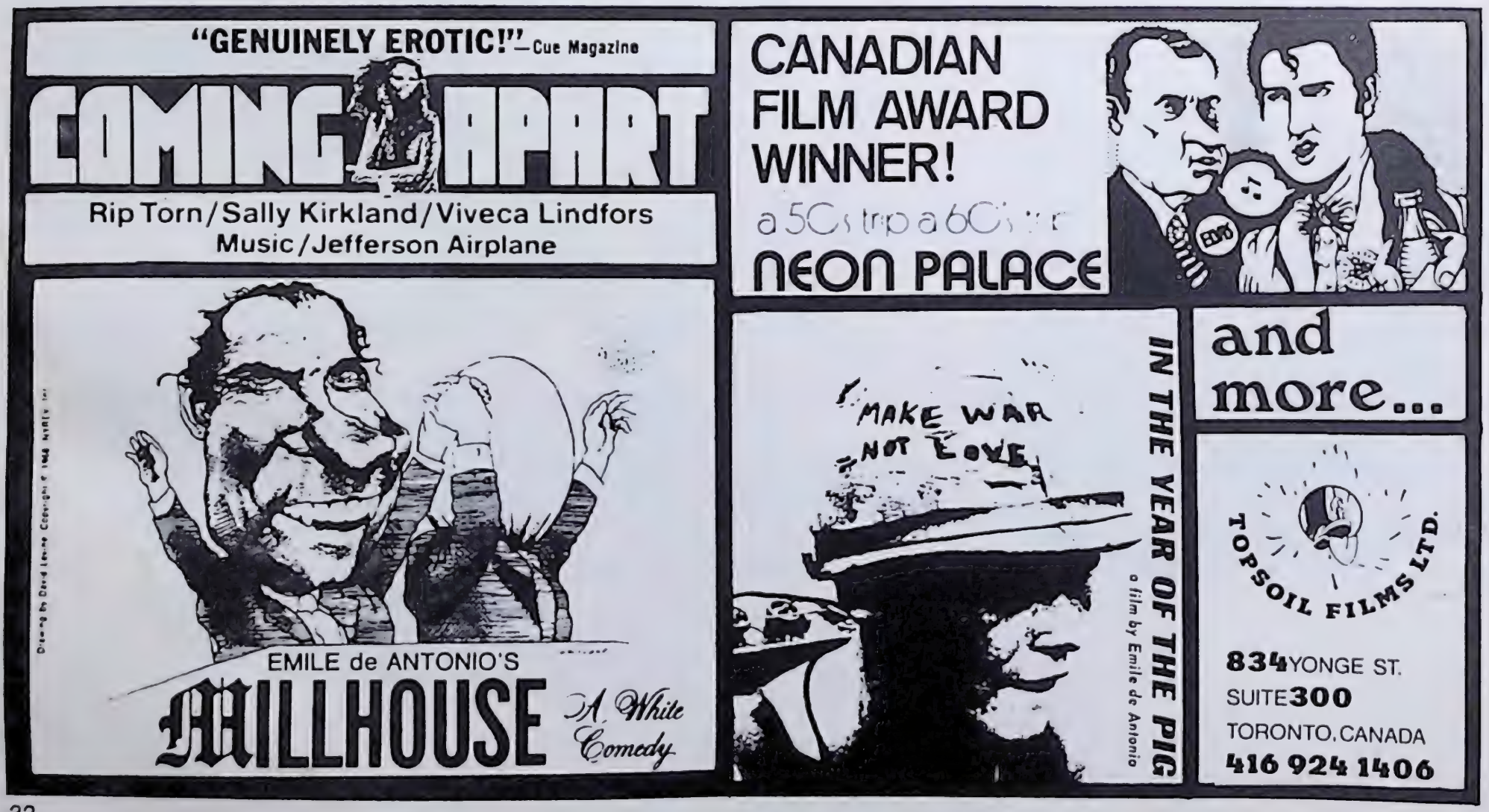
Dirty Harry: Despite its fascist ideology (several scenes were obviously penned by J. Edgar Hoover, writing incognito) this cops and killers exercise by Don Seigel can give **French Connection** cards and spades and come out on top. It's only second-rate Seigel, but that ain't bad.

Black Jesus: 90-minutes of dull violence and Woody Strode trying hard. Is Africa really like this? Is the Pope a Jew?

REFLEC--TIONS ON THE CURRENT SCENE

by HERMAN G. WEINBERG

It is refreshing to turn from the uninformed animadversions of Andrew Sarris' article, "Lubitsch in the Thirties", in the Winter '71-'72 *Film Comment*, to the new book by one of the "victims" of this article — no less than René Clair — the book being an updating of an earlier work of Clair's called *Cinema Yesterday and Today* which Dover Publications in New York has just brought out. Sarris' article not only demolishes Clair, but also von Stroheim and Chaplin (from his epochal **A Woman of Paris** "to the end of his career") as well as *The Lubitsch Touch*, with a passing swipe at its subject for such an "error" as **The Man I Killed** and such "balancing acts" as **The Marriage Circle** and **Trouble in Paradise**. Quite a massacre for one page, and also quite an exercise in futility. Clair's book, on the other hand, is the most serene, cool and patrician writing on the cinema extant, and while Sarris is unilaterally, and with overweening arrogance, out to Set Things Right, Clair



composes a paean (like *Saint Cinema*, if I may, and, yes, *The Lubitsch Touch*) to all that is best and enduring in the cinema. I recommend Clair's book to you *in excelsis*. It makes up for a lot of dubious, if not baneful, writing that passes for criticism and history today among our "Film-Johnnies-Come-Lately."

(I don't use that appelation lightly. Since Lubitsch died 25 years ago, Sarris, not ever having interviewed him, drew on material in my own *The Lubitsch Touch* to adorn his *Interviews With Film Directors*. He now proceeds to conveniently forget that fact and finds *The Lubitsch Touch* wanting, so that it may serve his purpose to pose as a pundit. There are other aspects of this affair, but they would make nasty reading of a Sunday.)

John Baxter's *The Cinema of Josef von Sternberg* is an oddity of a different stripe. For me it was disconcerting to keep coming upon passage after passage that had been lifted (without credit, *bien entendu*) from my own earlier study of von Sternberg. At least *he* had the decency not to attack the book for providing him with material. It is handsomely illustrated, too, and recommended for its enthusiasm (Zwemmer/A. S. Barnes).

That leaves two books: the script of Papst's **Pandora's Box** (that Lorrimer brought out in England, and that Simon & Schuster will distribute here) — that great German director's ode to the witchery of Louise Brooks — is handsomely illustrated in stills, and yet another addition to the valuable library of classic and modern film scripts this salutory house is building up. Tom Curtiss' affectionate memoir, *Von Stroheim* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), is the first biography done in close cooperation with the director. Much of it is drawn from hitherto undisclosed source material, and is preceded by a foreword drawn from some words spoken by René Clair at a retrospective showing of Stroheim films at the 1958 Venice Film Festival, the year following the director's death. I ask you to read this page-and-a-half outpouring of the human heart, and ask yourself if it is not *this* that matters above all else — that humility which Ruskin felt was the first real test of a truly great man. "Really great men see something divine in every other man and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful." "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly," said Saint-Exupery. "What is essential is invisible to the eye." Look what heartlessness has done to the world. Thus, when one great man (René Clair) utters a eulogy of another great man, (Erich von Stroheim), that moment is as beautiful as the world can get. And from it we can all learn.

Claude Jutra's new film, **Mon Oncle Antoine**, may well be the best film made in Canada since **Marie Chapdelaine**, a non-Canadian work, and that was a long time ago. (Duvivier brought Madeleine Renaud and a Parisian crew over from France.) Not that the talented director of **A Tout Prendre** has had much competition in the feature film field in his native heath. Just the same, it is an estimable work — the sort of thing Truffaut might have made on a guest stint in Quebec for the National Film Board, who are, indeed, the film's producers. Certainly, the dark-eyed youngster who plays the central role is a Québécois Jean-Pierre Léaud (about the time of **Les Quatre Cents Coups**, say, which this film frequently resembles). For two-thirds of its way it shows scenes of French-Canadian (Quebec) provincial life during a long cold winter, without stressing any particular theme, when suddenly it tells a harrowing anecdote of that winter. The film ends, like **Les Quatre Cents Coups**, on a frozen shot of the boy at the most unhappy "happy end" imaginable. It is a curious anecdote but not a curious film. For me, the most interesting aspects were the documentary ones. **Mon Oncle Antoine** may be *sui generis* a good Canadian film, but what I'd have preferred is a straight documentary on the Québécois by Jutra — without the implementation of an imposed "story". I know you can't get backing for that sort of thing. *Tant pis*, as they say, with such fascinating material to work with as the incredible Province of Quebec, not to mention that even more incredible background material that is Canada *in toto*. Good old N.F.B., anyway . . . . Now they've got the two best men of the Canadian cinema, Norman McLaren and Claude Jutra, and between them they encompass quite a range.

Herman G. Weinberg has contributed articles to most of the world's leading film journals, served on the juries of various film festivals, been US correspondent for Sight & Sound *as well as* Cahiers du Cinéma, *and published several books on the cinema.*

IN THE WORKS

Herewith, as complete and up-to-date as we can make it, a necessarily brief summary of recent Canadian independent feature-film activity. Productions that have (to the best of our knowledge) received assistance from the Canadian Film Development Corporation are indicated by an asterisk. (Assembled with the assistance of the Cinémathèque Québécoise.)

On the Toronto front, Quadrant Films will begin shooting at the end of April on **Introducing Suzie**, written by and starring Mickey ROONEY (Harold GREENBERG — President of Bellevue-Pathé — is to be Executive Producer). Meanwhile, Allan KING has completed **Come on Children*** (formerly titled **Youth Film**), shooting in super-16, and release is scheduled for April or May; Ivan REITMAN's **Cannibal Girls** has been completed and will be offered to film buyers at Cannes; Harvey HART has resigned from **Mahoney's Estate*** — shooting having been completed — and the picture is currently being edited under the direction of producer and star Alexis KANNER. The Robert Lawrence Productions feature **Ever After All** (working title: **Golden Apples of the Sun**) has likewise been finished and is awaiting final arrangements by distributor Gendon Films (the picture — the story of a young couple on a hiking trip — was directed by Barrie Angus McLEAN, with music by Galt MacDERMOTT).

Two Canadian-made films — **Eliza's Horoscope*** (directed by Gordon SHEPPARD) and **A Fan's Notes*** (directed by Eric TILL) — both to be distributed by Warner Brothers, have also been completed now and

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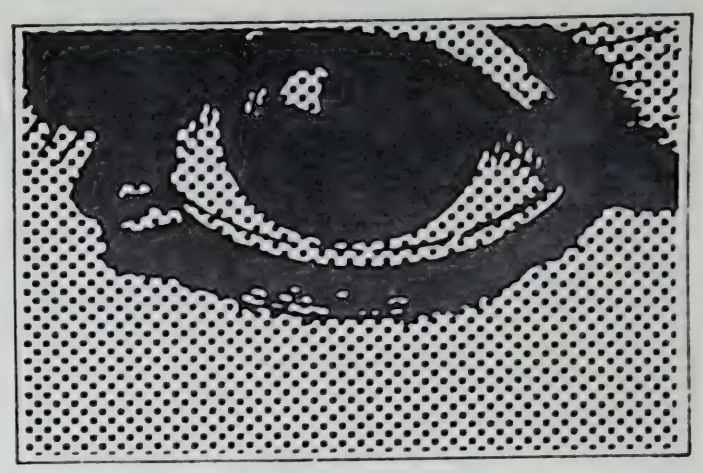

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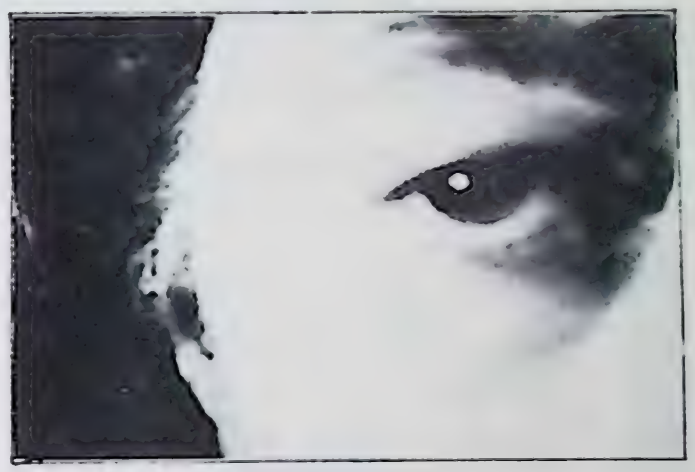

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way)

should be opening this summer or early fall.

TILL, meanwhile, has been set to direct **La Guerre, Yes Sir!**, based on the novel and subsequent play by Roch CARRIERE. The film, with a $670,000 budget, is being produced by Toronto's Cinemex International, which already has **Fortune and Men's Eyes*** to its credit.

And, also in Toronto, seven members of the industry were recently reported to have formed a film production company, initially capitalized at $200,000. They were filmmakers Don OWEN, Don SHEBIB, Peter PEARSON, and David ACOMBA. Also supposedly involved were Chalmers ADAMS (of the CFDC's Toronto office), lawyer Stan FELDMAN, and screenwriter-director Bill FRUET (currently at work on **Wedding in White** — which stars Donald PLEASANCE). That report has now been denied.

In Montreal, Les Productions Carle-Lamy, busy as ever, have now completed (and are awaiting release of): **Les smattes*** (dir.: Jean-Claude LABRECQUE). **La vraie nature de Bernadette*** (dir.: Gilles CARLE), and **Calibre 45*** (dir.: Denys ARCAND: previous title, **Une maudite galette**). In final mix, at the moment, is Jacques GAGNE's **La conquête***. With already three weeks of shooting under its belt is Carle-Lamy's **Kamouraska***, based on the novel by Anne HEBERT, directed by Claude (**Mon Oncle Antoine***) JUTRA, and starring Genevieve BUJOLD (whose **The Journey*** — in which she co-starred with John VERNON and was directed by Paul ALMOND — is now ready for release).

Jean-Pierre LEFEBVRE's firm, Cinak, meanwhile, is in the process of shooting **Ultimatum** (directed by LEFEBVRE himself), and will soon start shooting on the Michel AUDY-directed **Corps et Ames**.

Also busy in recent months has been Denis HEROUX. His **Un Enfant Comme les Autres** (shot in 16 and blown-up to 35) opened in Montreal at Easter, while he was already shooting **Quelques arpents de neige** (also called **1837** — for it concerns itself with the 1837 rebellion in French Canada).

In addition to Carle-Lamy's and Heroux's, other films recently completed in Montreal have been the comedy **L'Apparition** (directed by Roger CARDINAL, who is already preparing for his next film, **Les amants maudits**, based on the flight of Yves and Carmen Geoffroy), **Le retour de l'Immaculée Conception** (dir.: Marc-André FORCIER), and the Canadian-French co-production **Le grand sabordage** (a first feature for French director Alain PERISSON, this is a film about which a great deal is soon to be heard).

Elsewhere in Montreal, Pascal GELINAS is editing his **Montreal Blues** (shot in super-16); Claude CASTRAVELLI is editing his 16mm colour feature on life in and around a student ghetto, entitled **Anomie**; and director Joel UMAN is scheduling location shooting in Montreal for a horror fantasy to be entitled **Satan's Children**.

On the business side of the industry, Montreal's Cinepix (whose **L'Initiation** and **Valerie** have already earned back many times their costs) is currently trying to buy itself back from Calvex Inc., a New York firm that also controls Allied Artists. Cinepix partners André LINK and John DUNNING sold out 18 months ago for a reported $2,000,000 but have since come to feel that the benefits of U.S. ownership are not all that they are cracked up to be.

In what seems rapidly to be developing into a legitimate sub-genre of Canadian filmmaking — movies about the October Crisis — these have been the most recent developments: **Three Days in October**, which was to have starred Genevieve BUJOLD (written by Patrick WATSON and Laurier LAPIERRE) seems to have ground to a halt, at least temporarily, for lack of financing. Brian MOORE, on the other hand, has written a screenplay of **The Revolution Script** (based on his book) for Potterton Productions. Also rejected by the CFDC, it has now been financed by David Wolper (Don BRITTAIN has been tentatively set to direct that one). And Michel BRAULT, having had a feature on the October Crisis refused CFDC financial assistance, is going ahead with it anyway — but not until next year. In a related area, director Ken HUGHES is now planning shooting this summer on **The Killing Ground**, with the lead to be played by Chris PLUMMER.

Away from the major filmmaking centres of Toronto and Montreal, things have been moving as well. In Vancouver, Maple Leaf International Pictures Ltd. are shooting two features, **One Minute Before Death** and **The Oval Portrait** (both directed by Rogelio GONZALES, Jr., who has some 59 features to his credit, and starring Pia SHANDEL). Scheduled for a Vancouver premiere shortly is Tom SHANDEL's (Pia's husband) **Another Smith for Paradise*** (national release will be delayed until fall). At the other end of the country, **Child's Play** (based on the novel by Kate CHRISTIE, who also wrote **Morgan**) is set to be shot this summer in Nova Scotia, co-produced by Don GINSBERG and Frank P. (**One-Eyed Jacks, Madigan**) ROSENBERG. Meanwhile, in Edmonton, Filmwest Associates is busy casting for **The Double Hook** (based on Sheila WATSON's novel) with shooting scheduled for this summer in Cache Creek, B.C. And, on 170 acres of farm land near Oshawa, Ontario, Canukr Film Productions Ltd. is beginning shooting its third feature — the first to be turned out at Canukr's brand-new, fully-equipped studio (converted out of a barn). The picture is to be a love story, and will be entirely in Ukrainian ("The Ukrainian community is behind us" explains company president Walter Wasik. "The financing is just not coming from anywhere else yet.").

A number of other projects are advancing through various stages of script development, but have as yet set no firm dates for the beginning of actual production, nor announced any definite financing. These include: John BASSETT's **The Donnelly's** and **Last of the Big Guns**; Galanty Productions' **The Ecstasy of Rita Joe** (Daryl DUKE to direct), **Weekend Man**, and **Midas Compulsion**; Ian STUART's **The Farm** (Barry MORSE to direct) and **The Lichfield Strategy**; and Phoenix Films **The Straight Gang** (written and to be directed by Hart POMERANTZ).

And Otto PREMINGER has been in Ottawa having discussions with both the Canadian Government and Chinese representatives about the possibility of his shooting (in China) a Canadian-manned film on the life of doctor-hero Norman Bethune.

PARIS LETTER

GEOFFREY MINISH

When I dropped by the office of *La Revue du Cinéma* (ex-*Image et Son*) early in the New Year, a girl journalist I know there was busy reading the Groucho Marx interview in the December issue of TAKE ONE, just arrived in the mail from Canada. Beside her on the desk was the January issue of *La Revue du Cinéma*, which carried a photograph of Pierre Perrault on the cover and had nearly 80 pages devoted to him inside. I shall spare you the stock diatribe about Canadian cultural servitude to Big Daddy — it rings hollow from an expatriate — but the situation did strike me as symbolic: they feature Pierre Perrault, we feature Groucho Marx.

Still, better Groucho Marx than Morley Markson, and to be a pet of the Parisian critics is not necessarily an honor: they also admire people like Jerry Lewis and Gordon Douglas. But I remember that when I mentioned Perrault to a girl writer for TAKE ONE who passed through Paris last summer, catching up on her Godard at the Cinémathèque, she admitted she had never heard of him. Now, at least one of Perrault's films, **L'Acadie, L'Acadie** (co-directed with Michel Brault) is on a level with the best work of Godard, (which for me is still **Alphaville** and **Les Carabiniers**) and he is light-years ahead of Godard in creating effective political cinema. As Louis Marcorelles says in an article in *La Revue du Cinéma*, comparing Perrault with Miklos Jancso and early Glauber Rocha, Perrault's attempt to capture "the reality of an alienated country" is nothing less than politically revolutionary. He might have added that Perrault does not aim his efforts entirely toward his fellow Québécois: there is a sequence in **L'Acadie, L'Acadie** showing a delegation of French-speaking students petitioning the Moncton, N.B. city council and being ordered to speak English, which this anglophone, at any rate, found humiliating to watch.

In case, however, it seem that my admiration for Perrault stems from a bad conscience, I should say that Perrault's cinema-vérité aesthetic is about as far removed as it could be from what I personally like to see on the screen — a **Top Hat** or a **Darling Lili**. Nor do I share his enthusiasm for country folk, colonialist victims or not. If I am going to watch anthropologist cinema I want it to be something like **Tabu**, a film that Perrault, with his obsession for uncooked reality, no doubt despises. Why go and see his films, then? I think because of a certain moral quality they reflect — the same sort of basic decency that makes you forgive, for instance, the ideological failings of a John Ford. Perrault has managed to live for more than 40 years without losing faith in his fellow man, and there again that gives him the political edge over Godard. Misanthropy is fine on the artistic level, but it becomes, literally, murderous on the political. I should not care to be in any revolution led by Monsieur Godard, whereas I could imagine following Perrault, if I were stupid enough to follow anyone.

A chronological biography of Perrault in *La Revue du Cinéma* ends this way.

1969: He finished shooting **Un Pays Sans Bon Sens** and **L'Acadie, L'Acadie**.

1970: The National Film Board refuses to give **Un Pays Sans Bon Sens** normal distribution. Underground screenings.

1971: He completes **L'Acadie, L'Acadie**, but again the NFB refuses to distribute it.

Publication of a book of poems, *En Désespoir de Cause*.

He travels up and down the country with a print of **Un Pays Sans Bon Sens**

. . .

If it is true that an artist's political importance can be gauged by his country's efforts to suppress his work, as in the Soviet fashion, then the Canadian establishment must take Perrault very seriously indeed.

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Horizons West by Jim Kitses; Indiana University Press: Bloomington and London. Cloth: $5.95; paper: $2.25. 1970. 175 pages.

Seven years ago I saw Sam Peckinpah's **Major Dundee**, and although I then had no idea who Peckinpah was, I soon recognized it as a first-rate western, possibly the best western I had ever seen. But after the first hour the film began to falter and collapse. One thing was obvious: no director could be as self-destructive as the mid-portion of this

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film indicated. Obviously, a Neanderthal producer had exercized his brainless but potent hand to mar a potential classic.

Subsequently I saw **Major Dundee** four times, along with all the other films I could find that Peckinpah had written or directed. But I didn't learn what had happened to **Major Dundee** until Jim Kitses revealed it in his marvelous little book on the western entitled ***Horizons West***.

At its simplest, ***Horizons West*** is four essays: one on the western in general, followed by essays on Anthony Mann, Budd Boetticher and Sam Peckinpah. But the Kitses book is more: it is the first really probing critical study of the western — the most critically overlooked and misunderstood genre of the American cinema — and its three most recent and capable directors. Except for such classic westerns as **High Noon**, and the brilliant directorial work of John Ford and Howard Hawks, the lesser efforts in the western genre are largely ignored. Only the French critics, and an occasional American such as Andrew Sarris, have probed the inner wealth of these other films, mainly as an offshoot of the *auteur* theory. With ***Horizons West***, Kitses has begun to remedy the situation.

Kitses' introductory essay concentrates on the relationship of the western to American history and myth. But unlike most traditional views of the western — which see it as essentially romantic — Kitses is quick to emphasize that the western is a much more complex and elastic form. He even suggests that the notion of "genre" is a mixed blessing when used in reference to westerns, because the western offers unlimited scope within which to study the human condition. Mann, Boetticher and Peckinpah found in the western the perfect forum or arena for their own artistic visions.

Anthony Mann died in 1967. Kitses' essay on the director is his most complex and complete. His elaboration on the character of Mann's heroes shows how brilliantly Mann replaced the superhuman western hero with a complex, always driven, often unbalanced, unpredictable and violent hero — best typified by James Stewart in four of Mann's better films. Mann's villain is his hero's alter ego — the man who provokes the wide variations of character within the hero. Kitses refers to the Mann hero as "schizophrenic [with] violent explosions of passion, alternating with precarious moments of quiet reflection." This hero has the highest moral sense, but it may disappear in an instant, to be replaced by psychotic violence. Mann is never better than when he introduces his hero as a relatively simple individual, only to shatter the illusion piece by piece. His casting of James Stewart and Gary Cooper in such roles made brilliant use of both actors by playing their talents against their popular images.

Kitses illustrates Mann's overwhelming concern with character in relation to nature, showing how Mann employed the outdoors as an essentially hostile universe. The landscape is literally a character, affecting all who travel through it. In this respect, Mann is among the most cinematic of directors; his ability to use terrain as a comment on his characters' relationship is part of his directorial strength.

Kitses' essay on Boetticher immediately establishes the relationship between Boetticher's personal life and his films, stressing that Boetticher's view of life is similar to his concept of the west through which his hero rides — an archaic world in which a man journeys, always subject to fateful encounters. Unlike Mann's hero, Boetticher's hero is a wanderer with undefined, or loosely defined, purposes, whose actions vary with the outer forces of circumstance.

Boetticher's strength as a director rests primarily on his series of westerns with Randolph Scott. Kitses sees these little westerns, in which Scott is essentially the same character, as comedies — "deeply ironic works, but comedies all the same." The Boetticher hero is composed, possessing the philosophy that he is "fundamentally alone in a world where nothing lasts." The hero has his roots in the past — his hand has long been played out. The essence of the hero is "the knowledge that action is both gratuitous and essential." The real substance of the Boetticher film is found in the conflict between the hero, with no real purpose, and the villain, who always has a clearly defined purpose — with which the audience is usually sympathetic. In this sense, Kitses rightly sees the hero as a "killjoy" who must oppose and thwart the villain (whom he often likes) even when he doesn't have to. The villain in a Boetticher film is almost always more sympathetic than the hero, and certainly more human. Rarely are viewers' loyalties more torn than when watching Boetticher's hero and villain fight it out to the death. At the moment when the hero foolishly destroys the villain, we are at the center of Boetticher's vision of the world — a world that is essen-

tially absurd.

No director ever made films quite as easy to overlook as Boetticher. Their very smallness contributes to this, and they are invariably programmed on the lower half of double bills. Yet, as Kitses stresses, the films are a series and must be viewed as such to appreciate their worth and consistency. This, perhaps, is the primary reason for their neglect.

From Boetticher, Kitses moves on to study the bizarre career of Sam Peckinpah, beginning with the amazing tale of **Major Dundee** — what it was to have been, the fate that befell it, and the valiant efforts to save what was easily one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken in the American cinema — a full-scale study of the national identity crisis that took place during the Civil War. That Peckinpah could have realized his intentions must be apparent to anyone who has seen the truncated film with its many brilliant passages. The mutilation of **Major Dundee** is surely one of the great tragedies of recent film history.

Peckinpah's approach to the western differs from Mann's and Boetticher's in that his films are westerns in terms of time. Peckinpah brings an historical perspective to his films, although they are greatly different from the epic vistas of John Ford. The period in which a Peckinpah film is set is crucial to a proper understanding of it. Within this period there is no hero, no villain. Peckinpah's characters seek identity in a violent and swiftly changing world — a world moving so fast that they cannot remain their own masters.

Peckinpah goes from this unstable outer world into a darker, inner world in which he studies man's conflicting impulses toward good and evil. This primitive struggle makes Peckinpah the most profound of the three directors considered, and the most fundamental artist. His works are fewer, yet greater, than his contemporaries. Kitses' essay is necessarily incomplete, because the final verdict on Peckinpah is far distant. Thus, Kitses analyzes the films in a more piecemeal fashion. Nevertheless, his analyses are bold (his comments on **The Wild Bunch** are as controversial, in many respects, as the film itself).

Kitses leaves one with a renewed respect for the strength and flexibility of the western. As a study of these three directors, ***Horizons West*** is also an understated tribute to actors such as James Stewart and Randolph Scott, who were capable of realizing characters just as complex and real as any found in major, non-western film drama.

Eugene Ferraro

Now an Army lieutenant with special duties in regard to film and television programming for soldiers, Eugene Ferraro earlier received his master's degree in film from Columbia University.

Source Catalog No. 1: Communications, Assembled by The Source Collective, published on "100% recycled paper" by Swallow Press Inc., P.O. Box 21066, Washington, DC, 20009, USA, $1.50.

The link between information and power has a long and respectable revolutionary background. In 18th Century France the idea of presenting information in an organized, easy-to-understand fashion was seen as a political act. The Encyclopedists had a big hand in starting and running the revolution. British reformers of the 19th Century set up the Mechanics' Institute libraries and reading rooms with the idea that access to information would give workers political conciousness and, eventually, political power. The 1970's have seen a revival of this ideal. Starting with the extremely successful *Whole Earth Catalogues*, and continuing through various periodical publications, the idea that well-organized, cheaply available "counterculture" information is connected with power continues to flourish. ***Source Catalog No. 1***, whose subject is communications, is a fascinating addition to this bookshelf. Billing itself as an organizing tool, its 120 pages cover art, music, the mass media, film, theater, TV & video, periodicals and libraries.

A sampling of the index will demonstrate how the catalogue works. Under "P" you find the entry "pigs; see police." Under police you find "police brutality: ADO15g" which turns out to be a California puppet theatre that uses Punch and Judy characters in modern tales of women's lib, draft resistance and police brutality. Other fascinating index listings are: AAO15g, Gay Switchboard; AGO30g, Last Gasp Ecofunnies Company; ALO61g, telephone rip-offs; and A1003g, The Himalayan Information Systems. Less exotically, there is plenty of hardcore information on groups involved in everything from journalism to video. It is active groups, rather

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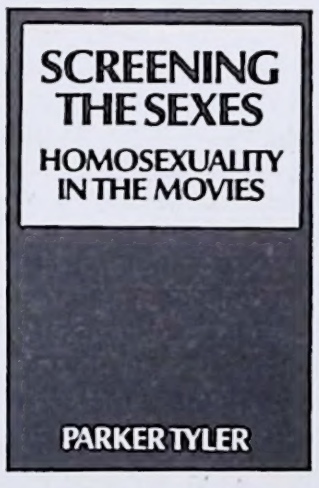

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than literature and bibliographies, that this catalogue emphasizes, and, therefore, is a very alive directory of people doing things and how to get in touch with them — a publication by, and for, activists.

A project of this nature has many inherent problems. Many of the organizations listed have dubious, transitory existences, and much of the information supplied is incomplete. The listing of films and books with each section is, unfortunately very slight and poorly selected — but the idea behind ***Source*** is still excellent. We are controlled by what we know, and most information is fed to us from sources acting in their own (generally commercially oriented) interests. If you believe in the idea of a Movement, a growing number of individuals unsatisfied with the world as it is, and setting out with words and actions to build a new one, then ***Source***, with this catalogue on communications, and upcoming catalogues on communities, economics, justice, health and government, can be regarded as an indispensable nerve centre. Its organizers become the Encyclopedists of the 20th Century.

Ronald Blumer

François Poulle, ***Renoir 1938 ou Jean Renoir Pour Rien?***, 170 pp., Illustrated, Editions du Cerf, Paris, 15 francs.

This book, developed from an essay François Poulle wrote while a student at IDHEC, the French film school, is an attack on Jean Renoir from a Marxist angle. Poulle says his initial attitude toward Renoir was aesthetic, and he admired him more than any other director, but study of Renoir's films and published statements convinced him that Renoir had been content merely to interpret the world instead of trying to change it. Focussing on the films of Renoir's Popular Front phase, Poulle argues that the pacifism of **La Grande Illusion** is "questionable" and the film basically a story about officers, as viewed by an ex-officer who had served in such relatively privileged arms as the cavalry and flying corps. The trouble, apparently, stems from Renoir's family background: the individualistic artisan's attitude he inherited from Auguste Renoir prevented him from becoming a good collectivist.

No doubt, but it can also be argued that Renoir's best films are precisely those—like **Une Partie de Campagne** and **French-Cancan**—that most faithfully reflect his father's sensuous lyricism. His most political film, **La Vie est à Nous**, produced in 1936 by the French Communist Party and put together by a team under Renoir's supervision, is surely his worst. Poulle admits he has never seen the film, a hard one to track down (it was revived not long ago in Paris, after this book was written), and the fact that he has to rely on secondhand opinion for this of all Renoir's films is a serious weakness. Otherwise, short of accusing Renoir of insincerity, Poulle would have had to concede that once at least in his career Renoir did adopt a left-wing revolutionary stance.

On the last page of the book, Poulle says that his own generation of film-makers, aware that their work is being used in the service of oppression, wants to know "how we can turn our cameras against those who are exploiting our labor." It is not Renoir and his generation, he adds, who can give them the answer.

Too true: considering the difficulty Renoir is said to have had in obtaining financial backing in recent years, he might be glad of the answer himself.

Geoffrey Minish

Ron Blumer is a TAKE ONE Contributing Editor and Ph.D. candidate (McGill University). Geoff Minish is a Canadian-born freelance writer based in Paris.

Tulsa, by Larry Clark, 63 pages, $4.95, Lustrum Press.

This is a book called ***Tulsa***. It's 50 black and white photographs taken by Larry Clark, from the time he was 20 till he was 28, of the friends he shot amphetamine with in Tulsa, Oklahoma from 1963 to 1971. Since almost half these friends die before the book ends, this book is their epitaph.

Most people think the needle is a city-slicker; they don't see that tying-off going on after squirrel hunting. But the needle, you know, is just life coming at you in a certain way; and, as Larry Clark writes in his 4-sentence introduction: "Once the needle goes in it never comes out."

Tulsa shows you the story of two men, David Roper and Billy Mann, who start as teen-age rednecks in 1963, hunting, combing their hair, driving around, standing in David's house in front of a big picture of Jesus flanked by parakeets in cages, and also shooting up with some older guys. At first David and Billy have a great time rushing and all; then Billy gets a girl, an original, full-lipped, dewey-dark-eyed, hard-edged Queen of the Carhops. Four photos later, the Queen-after-speed has had a baby, has turned into a pulpy-faced sludge; then she's dead. Four pages later, Billy Mann is dead. It goes on: by 1971, David Roper's all that's left from the old bunch. By now his shit-kicker *machismo* has been inflated by the needle and The Laws into a crystal-clear, no-exit, *bandito* stance: he puts up an admirable piece of folk-art on the outside of his house:

> *Police* (the one's that tore this house up) 2/11/70. If you Dick-Sucking Mother Fuckers come back today Don't get mad if you find your Mother and Wife's inside Sucking Nigger dicks
>
> David Roper
> 2/12/70

Inside, he plays with guns, punches out his women, eases back the shade on the lookout for cops or dope, has a baby born dead, and the book ends as a new generation of 16-year-olds come over to shoot up.

This is a very, very simply-made book. But it tells a lot more than just about some Okie speed-freaks. It shows you, for one thing, the poor, dumb, sorry, wordless remains of what was once a proud, strong tradition of American prophets: the outlaws. Now these hicks may seem too small to bear such a large thing as the truth about Living The Outlaw Life: but the truth, friend, is very, very small. That's why it's so hard to discover. Larry Clark found it in ***Tulsa***.

L. M. Kit Carson

L. M. Kit Carson came from Texas, went all over the place, and returned to Texas three years ago. He sits there punching cows and co-directing the USA Film Festival, and is also finishing The Future's Ours *for AFI. (Kit also starred in* **David Holtzman's Diary,** *surely one of the best "unknown" films of the 60's. — Ed.)*

ANNOUNCING: AN INSIDE LOOK AT CZECH FILMMAKING.

All the Bright Young Men and Women:
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The "bright young men and women" referred to in the title of this new book are the filmmakers of the Czech New Wave of the sixties. Josef Skvorecky was associated with most of the important directors of this period (including Nemec, Schorm, Forman, Passer and Chytilova) and the largest section of the book is devoted to their work. However, the work of earlier filmmakers is not ignored, for *All the Bright Young Men and Women* traces the entire history of the Czech cinema from its earliest days to the post-invasion seventies.

Josef Skvorecky is "one of Europe's leading novelists". He is also an essayist, translator and screenwriter, whose screenplays have been filmed by Evald Schorm and Jiri Menzel among others. *The Cowards*, Skvorecky's first novel to be translated into English, was published by Grove Press in the United States and by Gollanz and Penguin in Britain. He is presently teaching at the University of Toronto.

All the Bright Young Men and Women is published jointly by the film magazine TAKE ONE and by Peter Martin Associates. Its 280 pages include more than 100 illustrations, a comprehensive index, and a chronological listing of the most important Czech films and their directors.

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